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Security Council

Seventy-second year

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New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 June to 1 September 2017) (S/2017/784)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 June to 1 September 2017) (S/2017/784)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

Mr. Mogae is participating in today's meeting via video-teleconference from Juba.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/784, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan covering the period from 2 June to 1 September 2017.

I now give the floor to Mr. Shearer.

Mr. Shearer: I thank you, Mr. President, for this invitation to address the Security Council and touch on some critical issues in South Sudan. I will provide a brief update on the situation in the country, as well as United Nations efforts to protect civilians and build durable peace, as per our mandate.

As we approach the end of the rainy season, South Sudan remains beset by social, economic and humanitarian challenges. The Government appears emboldened by its recent military gains, including in some key strongholds of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) that are loyal to leader Riek Machar. Deep mistrust of military forces, exacerbated by human rights abuses, fuels flights into neighbouring countries. Across the country, the opposition remains deeply fractured and has suffered significant military setbacks in recent months.

At the same time, the economic crisis is further fuelling public frustration and undermines the Government's capacity to deliver governance and services to its people. In many cases, civil servants have not been paid for over four months and salaries to security forces are also delayed. Localized conflicts continue to flare — their impact greatly magnified by automatic weapons and affecting areas outside the central conflict. There is now growing discussion about moving swiftly to elections. I continue to stress to my Government counterparts that elections must be inclusive, credible and fair, but they should also represent the consolidation of a genuine peace process.

Along with others here today, I remain deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation. This is a conflict in which the greatest number of casualties are civilians and not combatants. United Nations agencies assess that the total number of people in need is 7.6 million. The burden that humanitarians and donor countries shoulder to support those people with food, health care and education is enormous. The recent humanitarian response plan, which at one point was budgeted at $1.6 billion, is so far 66 per cent funded. I must underscore that without such humanitarian support, thousands of people would simply not survive.

The number of people displaced in South Sudan rose to nearly 4 million during the first half of this year. Of those, 2 million have fled to neighbouring countries: Uganda, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish to express my appreciation to those countries for shouldering that burden.

I continue to applaud the efforts made on the ground by our humanitarian partners, who reach millions of the most vulnerable people in the country. However, in critical areas, and often at critical times, communities cannot be reached because access is denied. Those include areas of the Greater Upper Nile region, parts of the Equatorias and areas south and west of Wau, where active Government military operations against the SPLA-IO continue. For example, humanitarian partners were only in the past month able to reach the populations of Bagari, outside of Wau, after being denied access for almost one year. Sustained, regular access is what is required and needed.

The splintering of opposition forces has had a negative consequence on humanitarian efforts. For example, the World Food Programme's regular convoys to Yambio — about two days travel from Juba — now require 13 separate permissions from armed groups along their route. Increasingly, combatants are shifting into criminality along major roadways, with civilian and aid convoys being a target. Two weeks ago, a driver for the International Committee of the Red Cross was killed when his relief convoy was attacked in Western Equatoria. His death brings the number of aid workers who have been killed in South Sudan just this year to 18.

Government officials need to take a more positive attitude towards our humanitarian partners, whom they often blame for creating a negative international perception of the country. Removing numerous bureaucratic impediments, including additional taxes and fees on humanitarian organizations, is required to acknowledge the valuable work that they carry out on behalf of the people of South Sudan.

As the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), we are working hard to support our humanitarian colleagues. Our modus operandi is to be robust, nimble and proactive. We have provided surge support to help protect key humanitarian facilities, such as in Bunj, in the northern part of the country. However, sadly, our missions have also included evacuating personnel during active fighting. I anticipate that, while we respect each other's mandates, that collaboration will intensify if security trends continue.

We are far from the conditions for safe return in most areas, but we are continuously looking to seize opportunities to support communities in returning to their homes, where that is possible. UNMISS will soon open a permanent presence in Yei and reinforce our presence in Torit and Yambio — all of which are in the Equatorias, to the south — to deter violence and human rights abuses and build confidence for people to return to their homes. The small Melut protection site in the north will be closing in coming weeks, in line with the desire there for people to return to their homes. We are looking at downsizing protection sites in Wau and possibly even in Bor.

We are working closely with our humanitarian partners to align our efforts so that people have a real choice to return home. The quality of services inside the protection of civilians sites and outside communities needs to be looked at to provide more balance. Having a first-class medical facility inside a protection of civilians site and no medical support outside clearly deters people from returning to their homes. Those efforts will also coincide with UNMISS efforts to increasingly project our peacekeeping forces from static duties out into communities where they are most needed.

However, ultimately, that movement will critically depend on how the Government and opposition forces behave. Where there is discipline, the results have been encouraging, but where those forces continue to prey on civilians, the protection of civilians site will remain a necessary refuge. Meanwhile, increased efforts are being made to identify malign and criminal elements inside our sites. Identified perpetrators and combatants will be ejected to reinforce the civilian character of the sites.

I wish to briefly address the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF). While the Government has officially repeated its acceptance of the RPF and UNMISS has closely adhered to the Government's clearances and protocols, the positioning of the RPF in relation to Juba airport — including at the Mission's adjacent Tomping base — remains a vexed issue. The RPF mandate is clearly and unambiguously set out in resolutions adopted by the Council. Together with my Force Commander, I am engaging with the Government in discussions over unresolved issues and will reach out to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) to meet with the Chiefs of Defence Staff from IGAD RPF troop contributors and the Government in Juba, as soon as possible.

We must also remember that the situation on the ground has changed significantly from a year ago, when two separate armies were positioned inside Juba. Today, security threats in Juba, we believe, are more likely to come from civil unrest that is sparked by potential economic collapse. However, the intensity of fighting in the Equatorias was not present a year ago. As a consequence, those areas are where the more than 1 million people who have fled to Uganda have come from. The bolstering of UNMISS forces with the RPF, as it gradually arrives, will enable UNMISS to further project into those areas, in line with its protection of civilians mandate.

Allow me to make a few observations about the current political situation. I believe that the space for

compromise over the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is narrow. The parties have shown little interest in engaging in serious negotiations on the way forward, despite the various initiatives aimed at finding a political solution to the conflict. The central conflict-resolution strategy must be political mediation via the IGAD high-level revitalization forum.

For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the national dialogue with caution and conditional on its remaining transparent and inclusive. I acknowledge that the process might appear partisan to an increasingly disillusioned and fractured opposition, but in past months it has provided a useful platform for open and highly critical discussion. By engaging with it, we hope to encourage a process that is aligned with best practices, while still nationally driven.

There is both a humanitarian and a political urgency to our meeting here today. In the past week, there has been renewed enthusiasm for and solidarity with the revitalization process. There are only a few months remaining in the transitional period stipulated by the peace agreement. External momentum to support peace is needed. It is critical now that the international community show unity of purpose in supporting an implementable peace process would that lead to credible elections in due course, but only after a period of transition marked by inclusivity and stability.

I am committed to continue that engagement. Together with the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, we maintain our good offices to engage all parties to meaningfully participate in the political process. We will continue to work with AU High Representative Alpha Oumar Konaré and support IGAD and its Special Envoy Ismael Wais, together with President Mogae and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, to hasten preparations and convene the high-level revitalization forum to bring the parties together. We will bolster collaboration among the region, the African Union, IGAD and the United Nations to prevent forum-shopping by the parties.

In all of that, South Sudan needs the unified efforts and attention of the Security Council, building on the AU Peace and Security Council collaboration and its communiqué of a few days ago. We are all aware that the country risks remaining a source of continued regional instability and a drain on international resources. The wider region has a critical role to play in convincing the parties of the need to compromise and find peaceful solutions. Collectively, we will need to deliver a clear and unified message to the parties on the way forward. The consultations of the past few days here in New York have been encouraging, but we are backing a process to which we urgently need to add substance. I count on the continued support of those present.

Finally, I want to thank the members of the Council for backing UNMISS over the past week as it has been truly gratifying.

The President: I thank Mr. Shearer for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mogae.

Mr. Mogae: I would like to thank you, Sir, for your kind invitation to me to brief the Security Council today. My briefing will build on the previous update that I provided to the Security Council last month (see S/PV.8030) on the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. I will therefore focus on a quick situation update, including on the forthcoming evaluation report of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) high-level revitalization forum.

Last month, I reported an incident of heavy fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Government (SPLA-IG) in some areas of the country. The scale of the fighting has changed this month, with the reports from the Cease Fire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism indicating that there has been a relatively lower incidence of fighting between SPLA-IG and the Machar faction of SPLA-IO.

However, fighting was reported between forces of the Taban and Machar factions of SPLA-IO in Unity and Upper Nile states, causing further displacement of civilians. SPLA-IO has denied access to a joint patrol of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and citizens along the Nile, so we are unable to provide a full picture at this time. The situation concerning the control of Pagak in Upper Nile state remains tense as SPLA-IG and SPLA-IO Machar make claims and counter claims.

The Monitoring Mechanism has reported the displacement of 3,000 civilians into Ethiopia. It also reports fighting in the Equatorias and armed robberies in some parts of Eastern Equatoria.

Intercommunal tensions are reported in some parts in the greater Bhar el-Ghazal region and the Maban area, where Vice-President James Wani Igga has been mediating between internally displaced persons and host communities.

We in JMEC are acutely aware that the humanitarian crisis persists mainly owing to the conflict, with 6 million people reporting severe food insecurity and continued inconsistent humanitarian access. JMEC remains fully focused on its mandate to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the peace agreement and is committed to supporting IGAD in its objective to convene a high-level revitalization forum. To that end, yesterday JMEC held an evaluation workshop to review a comprehensive report on the status of the implementation of the peace agreement. Once complete, the report will be presented to IGAD as part of our contribution to ensuring a successful revitalization forum. Allow me to elaborate.

In March, we took the deliberate step of enhancing our oversized role with the formation of six JMEC working committees, in line with the six substantive chapters of the agreement. Their tasks are to continuously review and evaluate the progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and to support and recommend remedial actions to be undertaken. The working committees have held a combined total of 38 meetings to date. They have engaged bilaterally with the Transitional Government of National Unity and other stakeholders, and they have invited briefings from key institutions and mechanisms charged with implementing the agreement.

Consistent with the terms of reference for the revitalization forum, agreed to by IGAD Council of Ministers on 2 July, the JMEC working committees have conducted a full evaluation of the status of the implementation of the peace agreement and prepared a report, which is under consideration. I expect the final report to be published by the end of next week. As I have said, once the report is finalized and adopted by JMEC, it will be presented to IGAD and is intended to mark the starting point for discussion in the revitalization process.

I shall not pre-empt the final report, but overall JMEC maintains the view that despite initial reasonable progress in the formation of the various institutions and bodies, the implementation of the peace agreement was disrupted in July 2016 and, as things stand today, little substantive progress has been made in the implementation of the key provisions. I have previously described the implementation as being modest at best, and from the evaluation reports presented yesterday nothing I have heard nothing to charge my view.

Fundamental to the full report is the irrefutable fact that the permanent ceasefire has been and continues to be violated by all parties with impunity, and as such, security has deteriorated to a critical level. Of underlying importance is the fracturing of SPLA-IO into two factions — one under the First Vice-President, General Taban Deng Gai, and the other under the former First Vice-President, Mr. Riek Machar, who is now in exile in South Africa. The expansion of the number of states from 10 to 32, in contravention of the peace agreement, has also fundamentally and adversely affected the intended power-sharing formula.

While some progress has been made, it is greatly disappointing that after two years, there are several transitional institutions and mechanisms that have yet to be established, including the special fund for reconstruction, the economic and financial management authority, the compensation and reparations authority and key transitional justice institutions. Most importantly, there has been no progress whatsoever in the permanent constitution-making process.

JMEC recommendations are that there must be an immediate ceasefire and an end to all forms of violence. There is a fundamental need for the demonstration of political will by the parties to undertake their responsibility to implement the provisions of the agreement. All forms of obstruction to the delivery of humanitarian aid must be removed. The Transitional Government of National Unity must expedite and conclude the constitutional and legislative amendments and initiate without further delay the permanent constitution-making process.

In preparation for the return of the displaced persons, a joint framework should be developed by the Transitional Government of National Unity, in collaboration with humanitarian partners. The Security Council, in collaboration with IGAD, the African Union and international partners, should put in place mechanisms to enforce compliance.

In the coming weeks, IGAD will convene a high-level revitalization forum and I wish to take the opportunity to reaffirm our complete commitment to that process. Together with one voice, we can

challenge those who believe in the military solution to the conflict. We urge the Government and all parties concerned to engage in the inclusive political process. The revitalization forum convened by IGAD is the best opportunity to restore peace and rebuild governance in South Sudan.

If implemented credibly and inclusively, national dialogue can play a complementary role in delivering long-term reconciliation. Given current conditions around the country, mass displacement, severe food insecurity and the total lack of institutional and constitutional infrastructure, it is clear that elections will not be feasible by the end of the current transitional period. Therefore, the high-level revitalization forum is the best hope for reigniting the political process.

We hope that the evaluation conducted by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission will enable parties, the region and all South Sudanese stakeholders to pursue the revitalization process from an informed point of view. We encourage them to take concrete steps to revitalize the implementation of the peace agreement without further delay.

The President: I thank Mr. Mogae for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank Mr. Shearer for his briefing. I also thank President Mogae for his briefing and his tireless efforts to bring peace to South Sudan.

The people of South Sudan are suffering and the promise of their hard-fought independence is slipping away. In fact, we are so concerned about the deteriorating situation in South Sudan and elsewhere in Central and East Africa that President Trump has asked me to go to Africa in October. While there, I will go to Juba as a representative of my Government, but also as a representative of the Security Council.

Six months have passed since the Security Council demanded that the warring parties in South Sudan cease fighting and return to the negotiation table. In each month since then, we have gathered here to lament the terrible situation in South Sudan. Each month, we have urged the parties to stop fighting. We have called on them to stop obstructing the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We have watched in dismay as hundreds of people have been forced to flee their homes every day and as hunger has set in.

Each month, we have watched the situation in South Sudan become worse, not better, and we issue still more calls to action. We are disappointed that the Council refuses to stem the flow of arms to South Sudan or punish those who victimize their own people. Still, we know that the real responsibility and power for change lies with South Sudan's leaders, but so far, the Government of South Sudan has not responded to the pleas of the Council to create an inclusive Government and put an end to the fighting. There is a great deal of work left to do.

The violence and destruction have left 2 million South Sudanese displaced, 2 million refugees, 6 million facing near-famine conditions and countless dead. The impact on children has been especially severe. Seventeen thousand children have been abducted or recruited into armed groups. More than 15,000 children have been pulled apart from their families and other loved ones. More than 1.1 million children face acute malnutrition and barely half of school-age children are in the classrooms. Those are sobering statistics with dire implications for the safety, well-being and future of an entire generation. The United Nations Mission is in South Sudan to respond to the crisis, help protect civilians and ease their suffering. UNMISS shelters more than 200,000 civilians at sites across the country. It tries to reach more, but its operations are continually frustrated.

We call on the Government of South Sudan to welcome the assistance of the Mission and cooperate with it fulfilling its mandate for the South Sudanese people. The United States is not waiting to act. Earlier in September, we imposed economic and financial sanctions against individuals who have obstructed the peace process, denied access to humanitarian assistance and interfered with the peacekeeping mission. The United States will do what it can to reduce the suffering in South Sudan and the Security Council and regional actors must do more, but our ultimate message to the South Sudanese leaders will be that they must seize the opportunity to take the initiative. They have a way to stop the violence.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development has presented them with a way to quickly resuscitate the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, but time is running out. It is the last chance at salvaging the peace agreement in South Sudan. The different parties to the conflict must use the next several weeks to commit themselves to the

process and conclude it. Our hope is that South Sudan's leaders will seize the opportunity. If they do not, we must resolve now, both individually and collectively, to do more to end the conflict.

As for the people of South Sudan, we look forward to delivering the message in person very soon that we have not forgotten or given up on them. The people of South Sudan have a friend and advocate in the United States of America.

Mr. Allen: (United Kingdom): At the outset, let me take the opportunity to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Shearer, and President Mogae for their briefings. I reiterate the full support of the United Kingdom for the vital work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission in difficult circumstances in South Sudan.

Two years ago, the people of South Sudan rejoiced at the signing of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. It was a symbol of hope for the young country, which had so quickly been plunged again into war by the rivalries of its leaders. Now, that document is a stark reminder of all that the Government has failed to deliver for South Sudan. As the Secretary-General said, the signatories to the peace agreement have demonstrated time and again that they are deaf to the distress of their own people and unmoved by calls for peace from the international community.

Conflict, hunger and horrific sexual violence have become commonplace. There has been gang rape, the recruitment of child soldiers and attacks on schools and hospitals. Nearly 2 million people are on the brink of famine and half of the population is food insecure. Yet, non-governmental organizations report that those starving are often too afraid to collect life-saving aid for fear of being attacked on the way home by those charged to protect them. We cannot even begin to imagine the choices that the people of South Sudan are being forced to make.

The suffering is forcing millions of civilians to flee, creating the largest refugee crisis in Africa and the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. Today, we have been presented with a yet another set of reports that demonstrate that the Government's declared ceasefire is meaningless. Government forces continue large-scale military operations, which have caused dire humanitarian consequences and disrupted life-saving humanitarian operations. Suffering on such a scale cannot be allowed to continue. South Sudan cannot continue on its current path.

As President Mogae has rightly stated, the international community must act and speak with one voice. In that vein, the United Kingdom strongly welcomes the joint efforts of the United Nations, the regional countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union to bring the suffering of the South Sudanese people and the fighting to an end. Those messages were reiterated at the high-level meeting on South Sudan on 20 September and echo of the calls that the Council made in March in our presidential statement S/PRST/2017/4.

We welcome the leadership shown by the regional countries of IGAD in launching the high-level revitalization forum and offer our full support, as I believe all members of the Security Council do, to this initiative's objective of revitalizing the peace agreement. If it is to succeed, it will take a concerted and united push from all countries in the region and a commitment to staying the course. The first priority for that process must be the laying down of arms once and for all. There is no military solution to this crisis, and lasting peace will be achieved only through the inclusion of all groups, armed or not.

We cannot expect success overnight. We must see the revitalization forum as a process, not a one-off meeting, although we must also guard against drift. Success will require all the parties, particularly the Government, to demonstrate the commitment and the political will to pursue peace, which have been lacking so far. The United Kingdom therefore calls on all parties to the Agreement, as well as estranged and other opposition groups, to respond positively and constructively to this opportunity for dialogue. We agree with others that at this stage elections would be premature. The United Kingdom has repeatedly stated that there must be consequences for those who seek to obstruct peace, and we have long called for sanctions against spoilers.

We therefore support last week's African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué and its call for all the necessary steps, including sanctions, to be considered against all who continue to obstruct efforts to restore peace and security in South Sudan. The international community, including the Security Council, must be prepared to act against those who

continue to impede progress towards peace and make the people of South Sudan suffer. We should make it clear to them that they will face sanctions if they do not participate fully in the IGAD process. As the communiqué says, South Sudan can no longer be treated in a routine manner. The United Kingdom stands ready to support the region and use all the tools at its disposal, collectively and individually, to compel the parties to choose peace.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, and Mr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their briefings, which have given us a very complete picture of the latest events in South Sudan.

The civilian population is suffering the terrible consequences of the prolonged crisis in South Sudan, whose own politicians are chiefly responsible for the situation. We should never lose sight of the horrendous suffering that the South Sudanese have had to undergo for far too long. The principal cause of the country's crisis is the fact that its political leaders have put their personal ambitions for power above the needs of their people. To date, 4 million civilians have been driven from their homes, 1.9 million of them internally displaced and more than 2 million as refugees, while 6 million — half the population — are facing high levels of food insecurity, including 1.7 million who are on the brink of starvation.

What is most alarming is that the situation seems only to be getting worse. The clashes between groups in various parts of the country continue, while there has been no tangible progress on the implementation of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. As if that were not enough, humanitarian workers, who in many cases are the only lifeline for the people most in need of help, are operating in an increasingly hostile environment, with limited access to those in need and under direct attack by all the parties to the conflict.

Given this difficult situation, Uruguay urges all parties to fulfil their promise to end the hostilities immediately and commit in good faith to a dialogue process on implementing the peace agreement. We should point out that President Kiir has launched a national dialogue process and, most recently, announced a unilateral ceasefire in May. In addition, we urge the Government of South Sudan to restore political freedoms which are essential to peace, ensure respect for human rights and hold the perpetrators of human rights violations accountable. It will also be crucial to ensure a secure and respectful environment that will enable humanitarian staff to carry out the enormous, difficult and urgent task of assisting those who are most in need.

Despite the complexity and difficulty of the situation in South Sudan, the international community is still working as hard as it can to revitalize the peace process. For example, in September 2016 the Council visited the country, and issued a presidential statement in March (S/PRST/2017/4). And we are also grateful for the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, among other stakeholders. In our view, and as Mr. Mogae has repeatedly stated, all the parties seeking a solution to the conflict must speak with one voice, while sending a firm and unequivocal message to the groups involved in the conflict. In that regard, we commend the coordination by the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD of a number of events that took place on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly. We also look forward to IGAD's convening of the high-level revitalization forum on the August 2015 peace agreement, which will be a good opportunity to revitalize the political process in South Sudan and lay the groundwork for the holding of democratic elections at the end of the transition period.

Finally, we would like to highlight the tireless efforts of Mr. Shearer and the staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in fulfilling their appointed tasks. We also look forward to seeing the full and speedy deployment of the Regional Protection Force, which will no doubt help to increase stability in the country.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and President Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their comprehensive briefings.

As the serious overall situation in South Sudan continues unabated, our message also remains unchanged. The violations of the ceasefire and restrictions on humanitarian access must stop and the Government of South Sudan must cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai committed to action on each of those areas at the General Assembly last week (see A/72/PV.19), and the Government must demonstrate concrete results in that regard. The Council should remain united in sending a strong message to the Government and the opposition.

The human costs of the ongoing conflict are enormous. Nearly a third of the South Sudanese, many of them women and children, are internally displaced or have become refugees. Half of the population is food insecure. The international community's continued efforts are needed to fully fund the humanitarian response plan. On 19 September, Japan announced that it would provide $3 million in emergency grant aid to the World Food Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organization to help address food insecurity in South Sudan. But unhindered access and protection for humanitarian personnel are essential.

The only solution to these challenges is through the political process, and Japan continues to underline the importance of ensuring a genuinely inclusive political process that encompasses a national dialogue. We strongly support the efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to organize the high-level revitalization forum. Like others, we welcome the African Union Peace and Security Council's strong communiqué of 20 September, which sends the message that while this process represents a unique window of opportunity, it is also the parties' last chance to achieve true peace and stability.

We commend the robust posture of UNMISS under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Shearer. The deployment of the Regional Protection Force is also a positive development and we look forward to its completion as soon as possible, with full cooperation among the Government, the troop-contributing countries and UNMISS. The situation in South Sudan remains extremely difficult, but the revitalization efforts and UNMISS's work offer a way forward. Japan will continue to support the people of South Sudan in their quest for lasting peace and security.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as Mr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their substantive briefings.

We believe that it will be possible to stabilize the situation in South Sudan only if there is a lasting ceasefire and the start of an inclusive national reconciliation process. We note that certain progress has been made in that regard, in the form of the gradual implementation of President Kiir's initiative, launched in May, to begin a nationwide dialogue, with the participation of every ethnic group, political actor and population sector, aimed at achieving national reconciliation and ending the conflict in South Sudan. We agree with the Secretariat that this can be viewed as a supplement to the process initiated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for revitalizing the August 2015 peace agreement. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in promoting intercommunal reconciliation at the local level.

We have once again been compelled to turn our attention to the dire humanitarian repercussions of the crisis in South Sudan. Its escalation is having extremely negative repercussions in the subregion, producing a significant spike in the influx of refugees into neighbouring countries. In our view, it would not be fair to lay all the blame for the persistent violence entirely at the Government's door. It is impossible for the unilateral ceasefire that Mr. Kiir announced in May to be implemented without reciprocal measures on the part of the opposition.

We continue to believe that threatening the Government with targeted sanctions or an arms embargo would not help to solve the crisis, and might in fact exacerbate it. During our recent visit to Addis Ababa, the members of the Council were able to see for themselves how wary the regional players are about increasing the sanctions pressure.

We are pleased that the deployment of the Regional Protection Force is under way in South Sudan. We trust that IGAD and the Secretariat will continue working with the South Sudan Government on mutually acceptable modalities for the operation, including the involvement of the Regional Protection Force in the area of Juba airport. That is a requisite of the basic principles of peacekeeping.

We call on South Sudan and the troop-contributing countries to help the Regional Protection Force reach operational readiness. We welcome the Secretary-General's personal involvement in the efforts to achieve a settlement in South Sudan and commend the

cooperation among the African Union, IGAD and the United Nations. We hope that the current preparations for the IGAD-led revitalization forum for the peace agreement will enable it to succeed. While noting the Kampala and Nairobi mediation efforts, we share the Secretary-General's opinion that those processes require tight coordination. We would also like to note the importance of ensuring that the regional Powers maintain a united approach to the settlement of the crisis in South Sudan. Attempts to advance short-sighted national agendas, let alone to compete with neighbours in the region where South Sudan is concerned, could have disastrous consequences for the peace process.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Special Representative Shearer and Chair Mogae for their comprehensive and insightful briefings.

My country is concerned about the slow implementation of the South Sudan Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, since it remains the only viable option for achieving sustainable peace, and we appreciate the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in organizing the anxiously awaited high-level revitalization forum, which aims to include all parties in the effort to effectively implement the Agreement. At the same time, we must ensure that the national dialogue launched in May is truly inclusive and transparent. Such a dialogue requires a much wider collaboration among the Transitional Government, the African Union, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and IGAD. We also commend the efforts of Presidents Museveni and Konaré, as well as other stakeholders, to bring peace to South Sudan.

The crisis in South Sudan can end only if all these peace initiatives are well coordinated. We support the communiqué adopted on 20 September at the African Union Peace and Security Council ministerial meeting on the situation in South Sudan, and join others in underscoring how important it is that all stakeholders speak with one voice, thus avoiding mixed messages being sent to the parties in South Sudan. The support of the African Union, working closely with the United Nations, is integral to calming intentions and making improvements on many fronts. But we must also acknowledge that the conflict in South Sudan cannot be resolved or managed exclusively through political negotiations, because security and development are interdependent. If we are to address complex causes of conflict we must design effective strategies for international assistance in many areas, including sustainable economic growth, infrastructure and road-building, intercommunal reconciliation and preservation of the environment.

We are seriously concerned about the fact that, despite the ceasefire declaration and generally limited mobility, owing to the rainy season, military operations have continued in Jonglei, Upper Nile and the Equatorias, leading to a sharp escalation in humanitarian-access incidents, extreme food insecurity and the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. We therefore urge all parties to restore the permanent ceasefire and immediately stop attacking, arresting and detaining UNMISS and humanitarian personnel. It will be important to make the perpetrators of such violations accountable, and we welcome the recent progress made in establishing the Hybrid Court. Kazakhstan also appreciates the progress achieved in deploying the Regional Protection Force, which will play a key role in protecting civilians and improving the security environment. We welcome the decision of the Kenyan Government to participate in the Regional Protection Force and hope that the remaining issues will be resolved speedily and the deployment process completed on time.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan emphasizes the need for the regional and international communities to foster constructive understanding and trusting, mutually beneficial relations if we are to achieve the goal we all share of peace and security in South Sudan. We therefore believe that Mr. Shearer's latest meeting with President Kiir represents the beginning of an improved working relationship between UNMISS and the Transitional Government.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to thank Special Representative Shearer and President Mogae for their sobering reports on the situation in South Sudan. Like others, we are deeply concerned about this level of continued fighting. After four years of conflict, the civilian population continues to suffer from a lack on the part of the stakeholders of the political commitment and will needed to find a peaceful solution. But momentum is now building around regional efforts to end the conflict. We welcome the strong leadership shown by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) and fully support the process for revitalizing the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of

South Sudan, as was discussed at the IGAD Plus Plus meeting last week. We call for the swift convening of IGAD's high-level revitalization forum on South Sudan and urge that it be substantive. It represents a unique opportunity to bring all the stakeholders together, and we urge all parties to engage in the process in good faith. The steps outlined in the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 20 September provide a road map for the way forward. We welcome the proposal to convene regular tripartite meetings between the United Nations Special Envoy, the AU High Representative and the IGAD Special Envoy as a way to ensure better coordination and impact.

As we discussed in detail during our recent visit to Addis Ababa and with the African Union, only a political solution will end the crisis. To that end, an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties — the Government and armed groups alike — is paramount, not only to alleviate the suffering of civilians but to enable a meaningful and inclusive political process. Under the current circumstances, with massive displacement, elections cannot be held in a free, fair and inclusive manner.

The Security Council must remain united in its support for intensified regional efforts. We must strive to bring the international community together so as to speak with one voice, as many have said here today and as the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué calls for. As Council members, we must also live up to our own responsibilities by being prepared to follow through on our decisions. That means standing by the provisions of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/4) that we adopted six months ago, including preparing for further measures if needed, in lockstep with the African Union Peace and Security Council.

As we heard at last week's high-level meeting on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, the situation for the people there continues to worsen, with more than half of the population in need of assistance. We call on the Government to facilitate the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and humanitarian organizations, and to ensure that relief workers are protected. In that regard, we welcome the deployment of the first company of the Regional Protection Force and expect that the outstanding issues regarding its full deployment will be resolved swiftly.

We commend UNMISS for its continuing efforts to protect civilians, but we are still very concerned about the allegations of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, and regret the fact that UNMISS's ability to monitor and verify such violations and abuses, including sexual violence, is hindered by insecurity and restrictions on its freedom of movement. We stress the importance of establishing a Hybrid Court without delay and welcome the African Union efforts to finalize a memorandum of understanding with the Government towards that goal. It will be an important step towards combating impunity and hopefully a strong deterrent to atrocity crimes.

With initiatives for peace in South Sudan moving forward, we should consider ways to strengthen the participation of women in the process. We encourage UNMISS to support women's full and active participation of in those processes and encourage the Secretary-General to continue to highlight both violence against women and the participation of women in his reports.

The suffering of South Sudan has gone on far too long, and we call on all stakeholders to end the conflict. The current efforts of IGAD and the African Union need our full support. The momentum must not be lost.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Like other Security Council members, I thank Special Representative Shearer for his briefing and the dedication with which he is implementing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), in accordance with the three-tiered approach to the protection of civilians. I also thank President Mogae for updating us today and welcome his call to the international community to speak with one voice on the South Sudanese crisis.

Italy considers three fundamental aspects in assessing the situation in South Sudan — the humanitarian situation, human rights and national reconciliation and the peace process. The continued violations of the ceasefire are forcing thousands of South Sudanese to leave their houses, villages and lands every day. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is an emergency involving half the country's population. Neighbouring countries are called on daily to stanch this human haemorrhage with their limited means and the risk that the instability will soon spread to more areas of the region. Working for a shared solution for peace in South Sudan also means healing this wound on the African continent. While we all have a moral imperative to help

South Sudan, for regional actors it also represents a geopolitical burden.

The tragic situation in South Sudan has been further exacerbated by serious human rights violations. The conflict encourages impunity, sexual and gender-based violence and the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as constraining freedom of opinion and speech. All of this is slowly destroying the young South Sudanese nation. We firmly believe that without justice, there can never be true national reconciliation. We welcome the conclusion of the preparatory work by the African Union, with the support of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, for establishing a Hybrid Court, and hope that the South Sudanese authorities will quickly follow up in accordance with chapter 7 of the peace agreement.

Finally, with regard to the peace process, in the past two weeks some small but important steps forward were made at a meeting held in New York. The communiqué issued after the thirteenth meeting of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force, the African Union Peace and Security Council, the high-level summit convened by the Secretary-General and other events all came out in support of the IGAD high-level revitalization forum. With Ethiopia, Italy co-chairs the IGAD Partner Forum, which has been strongly supportive, politically and financially, of IGAD efforts to improve regional stability.

As we have consistently stated since we joined the Security Council, the crisis in South Sudan is also a regional one. It is up to IGAD to lead international action for reconciliation there, with the support of the African Union and the United Nations. We therefore reiterate our support to the revitalization forum, agreeing that this is "a last chance for the parties to really achieve sustainable peace and stability in South Sudan", as the Peace and Security Council of the African Union stated in its communiqué of 20 September.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I thank Special Representative Shearer and President Mogae for their detailed updates, and most of all for their tremendous efforts to restore peace in South Sudan.

The situation in South Sudan remains volatile. Despite the declared ceasefires and the effects of the rainy season, the fighting has continued throughout the country, bringing only more civilian casualties, more destruction of infrastructure, more displacement and more food insecurity. Moreover, the fear looms that the armed clashes may further intensify when the dry season begins.

Ukraine continues to believe that there can be no military solution to the crisis in South Sudan. A genuine political process within the framework of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is the only viable option for addressing the current challenges in South Sudan. The leadership and other stakeholders in the country must not only demonstrate their political will, but prove their commitment to peace through their concrete deeds.

International support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in South Sudan reached an unprecedented level last week. It is remarkable that three major organizations — the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development — were united in their desire to put an end to the suffering of the South Sudanese people. My delegation welcomes the outcome of the African Union Peace and Security Council ministerial meeting on South Sudan held in New York a few days ago. We believe that the communiqué issued after the meeting sends a clear message that the status quo is not sustainable. We also fully agree that the situation in South Sudan can no longer be treated in a routine manner, including in the Security Council. Urgent steps and decisions must be taken if we are to ensure that the current momentum does not become yet another lost opportunity for peace and stability in South Sudan. In this light, I want to highlight three points.

First, the fighting must stop. No political process has a chance of succeeding under the whizz of bullets. We call on all stakeholders to cease hostilities and commit to a permanent ceasefire without preconditions and in good faith.

Secondly, the political dialogue must be inclusive, transparent and independent. The commencement of activity of the National Dialogue Committee is a positive step forward. To succeed, it must enjoy the full support of all major groups of South Sudanese society. As it was underscored in the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué, the national dialogue should complement, and not be perceived as as replacement for, the full implementation of the peace agreement and the revitalization process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Council of Ministers.

That brings me to my third and final point. Ukraine looks forward to the high-level revitalization forum, which should create new momentum for the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. In that regard, it is crucially important that all actors involved fully coordinate their efforts and speak with one voice.

In conclusion, I want to underline that there can be no more excuses for not having peace in South Sudan. The international community is ready and willing to assist the Government of South Sudan. In turn, the Government of South Sudan must finally deliver on its own commitments.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Shearer, as well as the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, President Festus Mogae, for their thorough briefings. Faced with such a bitter and, at times, discouraging assessment of this persistant conflict, I would like to focus on two points in particular.

First of all, upon having the magnitude of the daily tragedy recalled to us, I commend the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and of the humanitarian staff who provide critical assistance to people in South Sudan. The figures are staggering and point to the sheer scale of the crisis, which is worsened by the particularly dire conditions in South Sudan, particularly for those who deliver aid to the population.

South Sudan is indeed among the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers, 18 of whom have been killed since the beginning of this year. We cannot tolerate this situation. We firmly condemn the attacks and access restrictions targeting UNMISS personnel as well as humanitarian actors.

We call upon all parties to respect international humanitarian law and provide access to the most vulnerable people. Enabling humanitarian staff to do their work in conflict zones is a core requirement that must be upheld. Such attacks against humanitarian workers, facilitated by the proliferation of weapons in South Sudan, serve as a reminder of the importance of considering the imposition of an arms embargo to deprive parties to the conflict of opportunities to perpetrate such violence.

In this difficult context, the protection of civilians remains imperative. France welcomes the efforts of UNMISS in carrying out its mandate under Mr. Shearer's stewardship. The robust posture that he has adopted to provide better protection for civilians is critical while the violence persists. The deployment of the first Regional Protection Force units is an encouraging development, although unfortunately this occurred more than a year after the Council's decided to establish it. It is crucial that the deadlock be broken as soon as possible.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the importance of moving the political process forward. We are aware that a lasting settlement to the crisis in South Sudan can only be political and can only be achieved with regional support. The launch of the high-level revitalization forum for the 2015 peace agreement should help advance this process. France commends the commitment of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and calls upon the African Union Peace and Security Council to ensure that the forum be made a reality as soon as possible, as is explicitly called for in the 20 September Communiqué. The parties must address these initiatives and fully commit themselves to the success of the forum.

The progress reports proposed by the Peace and Security Council, as well as the threat and imposition of sanctions against those seeking to hamper these efforts, should contribute to rapid progress being made. France welcomes the efforts of various stakeholders to make the forum a reality, in particularly the IGAD Special Envoy, the African Union High Representative and the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as Special Representative Shearer and President Mogae.

Smooth coordination by all in this undertaking is the key to success. France considers it equally critical to continue working to ensure an inclusive national dialogue so as to contribute to building lasting peace. We are further encouraged by the call of the Peace and Security Council for the establishment of the Hybrid Court stipulated by the peace agreement. The struggle against impunity is indispensable for achieving lasting peace in South Sudan.

The commitment of both our Council and the region are critical in order to bring about peace in South Sudan. Together we must take advantage of the next few weeks

to build upon these efforts for the benefit of the people of the South Sudan.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China wishes to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Shearer, and the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, President Mogae, for their respective briefings.

Since the beginning of the year, the Transitional Government in South Sudan has been committed to the resolution of the issue of South Sudan. The national dialogue launched by the South Sudanese Transitional Government and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is preparing to hold the South Sudan high-level revitalization forum. During the previous session of the General Assembly, the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and IGAD held a high-level meeting on South Sudan. The AU Peace and Securiy Council also had a ministerial meeting on the South Sudan issue.

Parties attending those meetings enhanced communication and reached consensus. China welcomes such a development. At the same time, we also note that the situation in South Sudan is very fragile: there is continued armed conflict, slow political progress, a dire humanitarian situation and a severe economic recession. South Sudan needs the continued assistance of the international community.

First and foremost, it is imperative that we encourage all parties to the conflict to return to the political track in order to achieve a cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire. China supports the national dialogue and the high-level revitalization forum on the South Sudan peace agreement, which is an important opportunity for South Sudan to achieve political reconciliation and implement the Agreement. In that connection, the international community should enhance its level of support. At the same time, the parties must enhance coordination and synergy in order to reach a political settlement.

The AU, IGAD and other regional countries and organizations must seize this opportunity for greater involvement in the mediation process, while coordinating and cooperating in order to fully utilize their respective strengths and advantages. In that connection, the Security Council should play a coordinating role so as to ensure that the AU and IGAD can assume leadership roles in the mediation process.

Secondly, the leadership role of the South Sudanese Government must be fully respected in terms of dealing with internal affairs. To ultimately address this issue, efforts must be made by the South Sudanese Transitional Government and its own people. Only by mobilizing this initiative on the part of the South Sudanese Transitional Government can assistance from the international community be much more productive and efficient. Before proposing solutions, the international community should engage with the South Sudanese Government in full consultation in order to avoid forcefully imposing any solutions.

Thirdly, the matter of economic assistance merits attention in order to address the root causes of the South Sudanese crises. The severe economic recession and people living in hardship are important root causes of the South Sudanese question. On 23 September, the First Vice-President of South Sudan, Mr. Taban Deng Gai, delivered a speech at the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.19) in which he expressed the hope that there would be increased support from the international community for South Sudan in order to enhance social cohesion and allow the South Sudanese people to engage in post-war construction.

While the international community is providing support to South Sudan — for example, in conducting blood transfusions — there must be greater input into economic foundations such as agriculture, energy and infrastructure. That will make South Sudan far more self-reliant, including in being able to ensure its own blood supply.

The Chinese Government has consistently supported the South Sudanese peace process through both bilateral and multilateral channels, including the Security Council, to promote development in South Sudan. To date, there are over 1,000 Chinese peacekeepers working in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Since the beginning of the year, China has provided $5 million in humanitarian assistance through the World Food Programme and has also donated through its bilateral channel 8,550 tons of food aid to the country. China is willing to continue to play its constructive role in helping South Sudan achieve lasting peace, stability and sustainable development.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Festus Mogae and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Shearer, for their briefings today.

With great sadness, we see that South Sudan is experiencing a serious political, security, humanitarian and economic crisis, which has shown no improvement in recent months. To the contrary, seen in the most generous light, the situation has stalled. Millions of South Sudanese people need humanitarian aid. The conditions for displaced persons and refugees are alarming; women and children are suffering from food insecurity and lack basic services; and there have been outbreaks of such diseases as cholera and measles — just to mention some of the problems in the country. Restrictions on access to humanitarian aid is therefore inadmissible. The parties must ensure unimpeded and safe access for all humanitarian workers and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on a permanent basis.

We condemn the clashes that have been taking place in the Upper Nile region. We continue to believe that the first step towards peace is the immediate cessation of hostilities between the parties. Although the Government declared a ceasefire, it sadly was not carried out. If clashes persist, there will be no way to establish a dialogue. We regret the obvious lack of political will.

The solution to the conflict in South Sudan will be through a credible political process and an inclusive dialogue that will lead to compliance with the 2015 Agreement. Accordingly, we should support the initiatives of the regional organizations. We emphasize that both the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have taken a stance in a timely in order to firmly address the main measures that need to be taken immediately. The African Union Peace and Security Council's communiqué of 20 September called for the parties to join efforts that were recently undertaken to create momentum and restore the political process in South Sudan through a high-level revitalization forum upon the initiative of IGAD. It is important that there be complementarity among the initiatives, and efforts need to be unified.

Another important item is to submit a memorandum of understanding for establishing the Hybrid Court. We believe that accountability would help the processes of reconciliation and recovery that are key to establishing lasting peace. It is vital that this process be led by the African Union, and we would highlight the willingness of the Government to move forward with the establishment of the Court.

With respect to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), we applaud the good offices of the Special Representative in facilitating the arrival of the Rwanda advance team. It is important to work together with the Government to allow for the proper functioning of the RPF. Similarly, we look forward to the deployment of the Ethiopian troops in the coming weeks. The RPF presence will enable UNMISS to address the conflict, protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance more effectively.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNMISS for the work and sacrifices they have made in South Sudan. Their focus on protecting civilians is noteworthy. We express our greatest support for this work.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your duties as the President of the Security Council for this month. I assure you of our delegation's support and cooperation for the remaining days of your presidency.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and President Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their service to the people of South Sudan.

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Security Council for giving me this opportunity to share our views on the Secretary-General's letter of 15 September 2017 to the Security Council, and on his report on the security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan and the role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (S/2017/784). Although there are allegations in the report whose accuracy can be debated, my intention is not to argue or contest those allegations; rather, I want the Council and the parties concerned to know that it is not the policy of the Government of South Sudan either to interfere with the UNMISS mandate or to hinder humanitarian access.

My delegation further acknowledges the fact that many difficult circumstances and challenges remain for UNMISS in the Republic of South Sudan. There are also signs of improvement and some progress that we

hope to build upon. We hope to build upon the close consultation, cooperation and manner with which the Government and the leadership of UNMISS resolved the issue of the Rwandan advance team of the Regional Protection Force. We hope to build lasting trust so as to improve working relations between the Government and the United Nations.

Our delegation to the General Assembly conducted a series of meetings on the situation in South Sudan with the leadership of United Nations agencies and funds, including the Secretary-General. We also held bilateral meetings with many Member States. Our delegation received several messages from the international community during those meetings, including the ministerial communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council issued in New York on 20 September, which my delegation acknowledges. Accordingly, the Government will analyse and review those messages, and we hope that the Government will come out with more policies designed to enhance cooperation and improve the day-to-day communications and interaction between governmental agencies and UNMISS.

In conclusion, we hope that in his next quarterly report the Secretary-General will note an improved environment for UNMISS and humanitarian organizations in the Republic of South Sudan.

The President: I would like to express my appreciation to President Mogae for having joined us and for his excellent briefing,

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8057

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8057th meeting

Wednesday, 27 September 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Biagini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Aviation security

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Aviation security

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Ms. Fang Liu and Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, Permanent Representative of Egypt, who will speak in his capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001), concerning counter-terrorism.

I now give the floor to Ms. Fang Liu.

Ms. Fang Liu: On behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), I am pleased to join his Excellency Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, in briefing the Security Council today.

Since its establishment in 1944, ICAO has fulfilled its central role in strengthening aviation, as mandated by the Convention on International Civil Aviation, commonly referred to as the Chicago Convention. ICAO provides leadership and support to our member States and industry groups as they work with us to develop the international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices and related policies. We have gratefully fulfilled that role for more than 70 years now, while achieving important progress in all aspects of international air transport.

Resolution 2309 (2016) is the first of its kind to focus on civil-aviation security, and also highlighted ICAO's role. Under ICAO's guidance and leadership, extensive progress has been made since then in enhancing aviation security. In that regard, I would in particular like to note the following. The ICAO Global Risk Context Statement has been updated based on the latest threat information. Sector-wide emphasis on land-side security, explosives detection and cybersecurity has been increased through the adoption of amendment 15 to annex 17 of the Chicago Convention, and security, and will be further increased through draft amendment 16. Material for a risk-management workshop has been developed to help member States produce their own distinct risk assessments. Guidance material has been revised to reflect the latest best practices. Capacity development projects have taken place in locations designated through our No Country Left Behind initiative, with the help of voluntary funding from member States.

In addition to those developments, the adoption this year of the Advance Passenger Information (API) standard, which becomes effective on 23 October 2017, will make it harder for foreign terrorist fighters to move between States. Our collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), with additional participation from the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) entities, ensures this important programme is at the forefront of States' priorities.

A natural outcome arising from our leadership role in aviation security has been the development of the new ICAO Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP). This pivotal document, which focuses extensively on the threat of terrorism to civil aviation, has benefitted from extensive inputs on behalf of Governments and industry alike. It is currently expected to be approved by the ICAO Council at its next session in November.

Member State enthusiasm and support for the Global Aviation Security Plan were clearly demonstrated during the recent Regional Aviation Security Ministerial Conference on Africa and the Middle East regions, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. By the conclusion of that three-day meeting, participants had developed a regionally focused road map that is fully aligned with the Global Aviation Security Plan objectives, and which includes monitoring objectives to ensure that this progress remains consistent and accountable.

The Global Aviation Security Plan's core objective is to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of global provisions and the sustainable implementation of preventative measures. To help accomplish this, it sets forth five key priorities aimed at enhancing risk awareness and response; establishing a better-defined security culture; improving technological resources and fostering innovation; improving oversight and

quality assurance; and lastly, increasing cooperation and support.

The objectives of the Global Aviation Security Plan reflect those of resolution 2309 (2016). Once finalized, the Global Aviation Security Plan will be the primary tool by which the aviation security community fulfils its roles, as defined in the resolution. ICAO will carefully analyse indicators and monitor progress in achieving these milestones, but of course the ultimate results will be largely dependent on the dedication and actions of States and industry operators. It will only be by virtue of sustained political will, especially at the highest levels of Government and industry, that the Global Aviation Security Plan will succeed. I shall come back to that challenge in a few minutes.

Many other challenges lie ahead. To meet the security targets identified in the Global Aviation Security Plan and regional road maps, capacity-development and technology-assistance programmes must expand significantly. States must also be willing to accept help in strengthening their counter-terrorism postures and in resolving vulnerabilities, and once help is received, States must be dedicated in following through with what they have learned and what they have received, whether it is equipment and technology, or training and mentoring.

The Global Aviation Security Plan establishes a mechanism to enable member States to confidentially request assistance as a result of our audit or through their own self-generated risk assessment. ICAO will be proactive in comparing all such requests with other States' competencies, and then recommending partnerships where appropriate.

Another challenge that persists for us regards the sharing of key information. For instance, many actionable details regarding recent aviation security events are still unavailable to ICAO and member States. We must find a way to identify and judiciously share essential elements of information necessary to implementing appropriate measures at the proper level. Resolution 2309 (2016) reinforces that point, and States have acknowledged it, and it is our hope that through the Global Aviation Security Plan, ICAO, States and industry can improve their sharing of information.

Looking now to the attack methods discussed in the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), held this past July, although some of them are not new, terrorists have made progress in exploiting vulnerabilities and circumventing the countermeasures in place. Landside security gaps, for example, have been exploited to some extent for decades now, but with recent amendments to annex 17 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, on security, we are now capturing the attention and participation of all stakeholders involved in effectively mitigating these risks. Amendment 15 to annex 17 of the Chicago Convention, which became applicable in August, emphasizes the identification of landside areas, the development of security measures aligned with a risk assessment, and coordination among the relevant actors. That new emphasis is now helping to bring together law enforcement agencies, security forces, airport authorities and even vendors.

Similarly, the threat from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in portable electronic devices is not a new one in air transport, having first emerged when such a device was concealed in an unaccompanied suitcase and brought down Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Effective and affordable countermeasures for increasingly sophisticated concealment methods have been discussed in numerous ICAO working roups, task forces and conferences, and new and more detailed screening requirements specific to IEDs have been incorporated into the draft amendment 16 to annex 17 of the Chicago Convention.

Of the threats we discussed in July, aviation's rapid cyberconnectivity growth is certainly the newest. The more we rely on computers and information technology, the more exposed we are to cyberthreats. Again, ICAO has recognized that challenge and is already cooperating with member States and industry to determine the extent of vulnerabilities and the most effective countermeasures. This topic will definitely remain high on our list of concerns.

Similarly, the use of projectiles against aircraft, such as man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), has proven to be of increasing concern, especially in conflict zones. Effective MANPADS countermeasure procedures are available to industry and member States through the ICAO secure portal. Each of these threats potentially generates a new layer of technology requirements, which become costly not only in terms of equipment purchase but also in building renovations, training and maintenance requirements, slowdowns in security procedures, and other effects on operations and facilitation.

Technology innovation was extensively discussed during the recent ICAO Global Aviation Security Symposium, which we organized earlier this month, in collaboration with Airports Council International, with the active participation of CTED and some other United Nations counter-terrorism actors. Participants recognized, and explored in detail, the need for innovation and synergies throughout the security system. This, too, is a priority action in the Global Aviation Security Plan.

As we look together now at the way forward, I would like to offer some insights on the current aviation security outlook.

Terrorist groups continue to view aviation as an attractive target, with the aim of causing substantial loss of life, economic damage and disruption to connectivity between States; the risk of terrorist attacks against civil aviation may affect all regions and Member States.

Therefore, the key element of the implementation of resolution 2309 (2016) and the Global Aviation Security Plan is States' commitment to ensuring the implementation of effective and risk-based measures that reflect the ever-evolving threat picture and ensure that such measures are in accordance with ICAO standards and recommended practices.

The Global Aviation Security Plan provides the foundation for enhancing aviation security worldwide, consistent with the objectives of resolution 2309 (2016). In that context, States and ICAO should continue to work and cooperate together, along with the civil aviation industry and other relevant stakeholders, to effectively address threats to civil aviation.

Therefore, all States are encouraged to strengthen their support for ICAO's work on aviation security, ensure the implementation of the Global Aviation Security Plan as a matter of high priority, and cooperate at the global, regional and national levels to raise the level of effective implementation of global aviation security.

This is an area in which the Security Council, along with the relevant United Nations entities, can assist ICAO. Security experts and aviation authorities understand the importance of the Global Aviation Security Plan and its implementing actions, but they need determined support — including legislative and operational authority, financial backing, appropriate resources and statements of commitment — to fulfil their responsibilities.

Through key mechanisms such as resolution 2309 (2016) and its supplemental undertakings, we must therefore continue to work together to encourage decision-makers to support these endeavours.

Obtaining financial support in particular is another major area where United Nations entities can assist ICAO. Member States capable of doing so must be willing to participate in ICAO initiatives to bolster security worldwide, whether through the loan or donation of technology, the provision of training in basic procedures or best practices, the provision of mentors, or via direct financial support for ICAO's capacity-building and assistance programmes. Increased contributions from Member States would enable a much earlier implementation of the robust assistance regime envisaged in the Global Aviation Security Plan road map.

ICAO, Member States and other stakeholders will then pursue further opportunities to enhance counter-terrorism capabilities in the locations that need them most. This will include enhanced risk awareness and response, a wider understanding of the threats and risks facing civil aviation, monitoring new and emerging threats to civil aviation, maintaining an updated ICAO Global Risk Context Statement and reviewing the measures set out in annex 17, on security, of the Chicago Convention and related ICAO guidance material.

The use of Advance Passenger Information System data, along with Passenger Name Record information, will greatly assist us in identifying air travellers who may pose a threat to aviation. We must also remain vigilant, however, to keep an appropriate balance between the necessary level of security, the passenger experience and facilitation objectives.

The importance of an accurate risk assessment, based on an equally accurate threat assessment, cannot be overemphasized. All facets of national and local activities should be focused on understanding applicable risks. Although the terms "security risk assessment" and "threat assessment" have been in annex 17, on security, of the Chicago Convention for many years, there remain varied levels of understanding, development and implementation of viable risk assessments among Member States.

ICAO's continued attention to the Global Risk Context Statement, along with our new Risk Management Workshop, intends to address this concern.

The ICAO Global Aviation Security Symposium 2017 highlighted the strong commitments by all members of the air-transport community to the principles and goals contained in resolution 2309 (2016). I remain confident that through our continued collaboration, we will persevere and be successful in reducing the likelihood that an act of unlawful interference will be committed against aviation. The recently established United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism will be an important ally with which I look forward to working.

In particular, I would like to highlight the cooperation between ICAO and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of aviation security. ICAO personnel are extensively trained and experienced in understanding the myriad ways in which compliance can be achieved in the aviation regime, and our participation in these evaluations also contributes to our own understanding of best practices.

We are currently exploring an arrangement with CTED in order to enhance our cooperation. Other United Nations agencies can also be valuable partners.

The Security Council may wish to consider allocating a portion of counter-terrorism funds and to encourage Member States to increase their contributions to aviation security projects, in particular for capacity-building and training, so as to enhance the effective implementation of ICAO standards by all Member States.

The Global Aviation Security Plan is a major milestone for civil aviation security, contributing to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Consequently, I call on the Security Council to support and promote the Global Aviation Security Plan so as to facilitate its implementation by all Member States.

In summary, I believe that resolution 2309 (2016) and the Global Aviation Security Plan will provide a globally accepted foundation upon which stronger aviation security postures can be achieved.

As the Council is aware, aviation, which represents 50 per cent of international tourism and 35 per cent of international trade by value, contributes significantly to the sustainable development of all States Members of the United Nations and to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This recognition of aviation's importance with respect to the threats posed by terrorism enables ICAO and the other entities charged with mitigating terrorist acts to press ahead with the improvements necessary in all areas of our strategies and operations.

I thank the members of the Security Council for this opportunity to brief them on the latest developments in aviation security, and I remain at their disposal for any future updates on this or any other matter relating to international civil aviation security.

The President: I thank Ms. Fang Liu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Egypt in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): In my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, I have the honour to brief the Council, together with Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), on the outcomes of the Committee's special meeting on terrorist threats to civil aviation.

The special meeting was held at Headquarters on 7 July, as requested by the Council in resolution 2309 (2016). It is clear that the global and interconnected nature of the international civil aviation industry exposes States Members of all regions to potential terrorist attacks. Attacks against international civil aviation cause substantial loss of life, economic damage and disruption. There is a growing awareness of the global terrorist threat to civil aviation. However, we must work together urgently to further strengthen Member States' implementation of the obligations and commitments aimed at addressing the threat. In doing so, we must work together to assist those States that lack the capacity to do so effectively.

Resolution 2309 (2016), adopted in September last year, outlines a number of priority steps to be taken by Member States to strengthen their implementation of ICAO's security-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Like the resolution, ICAO's new global aviation security plan also calls on States to strengthen coordination and cooperation among relevant national departments and agencies. I welcome the security plan. I also welcome the current initiative of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive

Directorate (CTED) and ICAO to enter into a formal cooperation agreement aimed at further harmonizing and strengthening their long-standing partnership.

ICAO, of course, plays a central role in developing and monitoring international aviation security standards. CTED plays a central role in supporting and implementing the policy decisions of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Council in assisting them to define the international counter-terrorism agenda and assessing States' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, including in relation to civil aviation. It does so notably through the assessment visits conducted to Member States on the Committee's behalf, through its analyses and through its identification of gaps, challenges, trends and good practices. Whenever possible, ICAO takes part in the Committee's country visits, while playing a vital role in the evaluation of aviation-security measures. The visits and the resulting recommendations made to the Committee are thereby in full compliance with ICAO's work and audits.

As the Committee's assessments and analyses make clear, many States lack the capacities and resources required to implement effective measures to strengthen civil aviation security. In a global environment marked by a number of new and emerging terrorist threats and rapid technological change, we must encourage and support all Member States to continue strengthening implementation of good aviation practices, in particular those set forth in paragraph 6 of resolution 2309 (2016). Those practices include enhancing screening and security checks, ensuring appropriate resources and effective quality controls, and promoting an effective security culture.

It cannot be stressed enough that gaps in basic aviation-security measures result in vulnerabilities that can easily be exploited and circumvented by terrorists. New, updated and revised guidance materials developed by ICAO should be fully used, and threat and risk assessment methodologies should be regularly updated and amended. Member States are often not sufficiently engaged in dialogue with all the relevant actors involved in the implementation of aviation-security measures. Many fail to perceive the need to adopt a risk-based approach and apply a common methodology to assess the risk. In that regard, Member States can avail themselves of the risk context statement provided by ICAO.

However, there remains a need to strengthen mechanisms for the sharing of threat information at the international and national levels, including by frontline aviation security staff, who often lack access to critical information or the knowledge and expertise required to handle and act on such information. Many States also lack access to the relevant databases, including those of INTERPOL and the sanctions lists of the Monitoring Group of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

Moreover, as CTED's assessment and analysis work reveals, only 57 States have introduced an advance passenger information (API) system. The low level of API implementation represents a major security gap. Resolution 2178 (2014), adopted in 2014, requires Member States to ensure that airlines operating in their territories provide an API in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories, of individuals designated by the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions committees. I should note that CTED is involved in the project of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre to help Member States establish API systems. The project includes regional workshops, capacity-building consultations and the development of a national API implementation road map.

A further major concern is the lack of protection in landside airport areas. Unlike security-restricted areas, landside areas are accessible to the public and often managed by a broad range of agencies. Particular challenges in that regard are the actions of lone gunmen, as with the Fort Lauderdale attack of January 2017; mass-casualty explosive devices, as with the 2016 attacks carried out in Brussels and Istanbul; and attacks involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs) carried by passengers. The use of information and communications technologies for malicious purposes and the potential vulnerability of aircraft and airport information technology systems also require our urgent attention.

Allow me to make a few brief proposals for further action by the Council and the Committee aimed at addressing the terrorist threat to civil aviation.

The Council and the CTC should intensify their efforts to raise awareness of and promote the SARPs

and the guidance material developed by ICAO. They should urge States to make the relevant national agencies aware of those tools, including by ensuring the provision of appropriate training for all relevant actors, in particular the frontline staff responsible for implementing security controls. I would note in that regard that the CTC recently reviewed the updated *Technical Guide to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2009) and other relevant resolutions* so as to reflect the provisions of recently adopted resolutions, including resolution 2309 (2016), as well as the tools and instruments developed by ICAO. The *Guide* is intended as a comprehensive reference tool to help States assess the progress of their implementation efforts.

The Council and the CTC should incorporate the relevant Council resolutions into the civil aviation security framework. For example, States should be encouraged to take into consideration the provisions of Council resolution 2341 (2017) on protecting critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, and incorporate them into their national civil aviation security programmes. There is also a need to increase understanding of that growing threat.

The Council and the CTC should promote the establishment of risk-management processes at all airports, including risk assessment, the implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and efforts to ensure that such measures are effectively implemented by security personnel. The Council and the CTC should urge States to enhance the protection of airport landside areas. The new ICAO standards and guidance material covering the protection of landside areas should be taken into consideration.

States should be urged to address the use of information and communications technologies for malicious purposes, as well as the use of sophisticated IEDs. The Council and the CTC should urge States and industry actors to regard aviation security audits as an opportunity to identify best practices, as well as capacity-building and technical assistance needs. States should be urged to strengthen their capacity to identify low- and high-risk passengers, while taking into account the need to facilitate travel.

Especially urgent, in that regard, is the introduction and effective implementation of both Advance Passenger Information systems and Passenger Name Record systems, as a means to identify terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters. The Council and the CTC should encourage States to step up their efforts to populate INTERPOL databases, including by ensuring connectivity to and the active use of, and expanded access to its I-24/7 global police communications system.

In conclusion, I encourage the Council and the CTC to continue to address aviation security-related issues, including by promoting the implementation of resolution 2309 (2016) by member States. This topic will continue to be considered by the Committee, including through regular briefings provided by CTED and ICAO. I also urge the Council and the Committee to continue to support closer cooperation between ICAO and the Committee. The CTC and CTED will continue to enhance their cooperation in that area with the Office of Counter-Terrorism. It is my hope that the Office will fully utilize the assessment, analysis and expertise of the Committee and CTED in this area, including within the framework of technical assistance facilitation.

The President: I thank Ambassador Aboulatta for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): May I thank Secretary General Liu and Ambassador Aboulatta for their briefings, which were both informative. I thought that they contained some important recommendations of which we can all take note.

A year ago, the Security Council met to adopt its first-ever resolution on the terrorist threats facing civil aviation (see S/PV.7775). Through that unanimous adoption, we showed our joint resolve to protect our citizens from a shared and escalating threat, and we started a global discussion on how together we would improve aviation security standards. We therefore welcome the good work that has followed over the past 12 months. It speaks volumes about the momentum created by resolution 2309 (2016) that the Global Aviation Security Plan was completed two years ahead of the original schedule. And we look forward to the plan being endorsed later this year by the International Civil Aviation Organization Council (ICAO). We believe that the Security Council should then add its endorsement and call to action.

And yet, one year on from 2309 (2016), it is clear that the threat facing civil aviation has not diminished; instead, it has evolved. Members will recall the plot to

smuggle bombs inside laptops, which led the United Kingdom and the United States to ban larger electronics from the cabins of aircraft for several months this year, or the failed attack at Sydney's international airport just two months ago — a sophisticated effort that would have claimed hundreds of innocent lives. Those are but two examples of the terrorists' unrelenting desire to bring death and destruction to our skies. Those plots should remind us all that we cannot relent in our efforts to keep our citizens safe.

Instead, we need to maintain the resolve we found a year ago. That means each and every ICAO member State turning its commitment to the global aviation security plan into real action. Lip service is simply no deterrent. Those who believe their airports and carriers are somehow immune from terrorist targeting are not just wrong; they are also irresponsible, shirking both their obligations and the common responsibility we have to protect the global industry and our peoples who use it.

Aviation is part of the lifeblood of our economies. We recognize that implementing ICAO's agreed Standards and doing so on the basis of recommended practices validated by robust verification is a challenge for some, no matter how good their intentions. Let us therefore support each other through technical cooperation and capacity development, as spelled out in 2309 (2016). The United Kingdom has recently tripled its budget for such assistance and has an active programme, working alongside dozens of fellow Member States. I call upon other Council members to do the same.

It is not just ICAO members that can do more. I see three ways for the United Nations, together with ICAO, to work better to ensure that aviation security remains at the top of the agenda, getting the attention it requires. First, threats to aviation security should be routinely included in United Nations reporting related to terrorism. We encourage the Monitoring Team of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities to make sure that it asks States about threats to aviation security and that those threats are properly assessed in the team's regular reporting.

Secondly, we welcome the close corporation that has developed between the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and ICAO. Those two agencies already work together closely and are developing a cooperation agreement. We encourage continued collaboration on CTED country assessments, but also on sharing information, research and analysis about the emerging trends in terrorist threats to civil aviation, and on cutting-edge ways in which they could be mitigated.

Thirdly, we encourage the new United Nations to work closely with ICAO and make capacity-building in aviation security a priority. We encourage them together to identify and deliver appropriate capacity-building projects, in line with the actions and tasks set out in the global aviation security plan.

In conclusion, the first anniversary of 2309 (2016) is a moment, in part, to reflect on what has been achieved over the past year; but it needs to be far more than that. It should also be a moment when we ask how we sustain the momentum created by 2309 (2016), putting into practice what we have committed to on paper.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Secretary General Liu and Ambassador Aboulatta for their briefings.

"We have some planes." That was one of the first radio transmissions air traffic controllers heard on 11 September 2001. More than 16 years later the pain of that barbaric act of terrorism remains. We continue to mourn the victims and honour their memories. Across the United States, Americans remember vividly exactly where they were and what they were doing when they got word that a plane had struck the World Trade Centre. None of us will forget.

Just as we never forget what the victims of 9/11 suffered that day, we must never forget the lessons we learned. We know that terrorists are determined to target civil aviation. They want to attack the links that connect our countries and bring down the infrastructure that is the backbone of modern society. Despite the many improvements made to aviation since 9/11, the threat is still all too real.

The threat of civil aviation continues to evolve at a rate that challenges even our best efforts to secure the global aviation system and recent terrorist attacks against aircraft in Egypt and Somalia make that clear. At the same time, a reliance on airplanes to facilitate the movement of people and goods continues to grow. As the global economy continues to be more and more reliant on aviation, keeping that system secure becomes more and more important.

Last year, through resolution 2309 (2016), the Security Council recognized the importance of aviation security in our global counter-terrorism efforts. The resolution was built on previous work to strengthen global standards to address the terrorist threat. Resolution 2309 (2016) highlighted the importance of mobilizing more resources and deepening our cooperation to respond to changing threats. We welcome the work of the global aviation community in response to resolution 2309 (2016), including through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

ICAO has developed the Global Aviation Security Plan, and the United States calls on the ICAO Council to endorse that plan as soon as possible. It is a vital next step towards increasing international cooperation on aviation security. Once the global aviation security plan is approved, it will be up to Member States to work with ICAO to make sure its recommendations are implemented and progress is monitored.

United Nations counter-terrorism offices should focus on helping Member States follow through on ICAO's plans. However, ultimately, keeping air travel safe requires each Member State to do its part. Just one weak link in the sprawling international system can become a catastrophic vulnerability. Consistent with resolution 2341 (2017), the United States calls on all Member States to strengthen the protection of critical infrastructure, such as airports. Member States must also be vigilant about preventing foreign terrorist fighters from travelling across borders.

The United States has helped to lead efforts in expanding information-sharing on known and suspected terrorists and improving border security through enhanced traveller screening. However, we have more to do to counter the foreign fighter threat. That is especially true as fighters from the battlefields in Syria and Iraq try to return home or move to other war zones.

Despite the progress we have made, the terrorist threat to aviation, airports and air travellers remains. Many countries still struggle to consistently implement and adhere to international security standards and practices. As Member States, we must hold each other accountable to ensure that international security standards are both rigorously implemented and adequate to meet new threats. No country should be left behind. We must continue expanding intelligence and law enforcement information-sharing and accelerate efforts to implement advance passenger information and passenger name record collection analysis and sharing to identify terrorists and criminals.

It is up to each of us to recognize our unique vulnerabilities. We must take a hard look at current threats and anticipate future ones. The United States will continue to take a hard look at our system of air travel to make it stronger. We look forward to continuing our work with fellow Member States and United Nations entities to ensure the security of the global aviation system.

Above all, we cannot forget the fundamental role that air travel plays in our lives today. The fact that leaders from around the world gathered here at the United Nations last week is a timely reminder of that. It is simply impossible to imagine the modern world without aviation. We all rely on the knowledge that when we board a plane, we will reach our destination safely. If we were to think for a moment about the stakes of keeping aviation safe, we would all agree that there is no time to waste in strengthening that vital system. That should push us to deepen our cooperation. The United States stands ready to help.

Mr. Biagini (Italy): First of all, I wish to thank the Ethiopian presidency for convening this meeting. I also thank the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001), concerning counter-terrorism — Ambassador Aboulatta — for his briefing. In particular, I thank the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Liu, for the great accuracy and significance of the organization's work in raising the level of safety in civil aviation. She has the full support and backing of Italy.

One year has passed since the Security Council adopted resolution 2309 (2016). In the meantime, as we have heard, the terrorist threat has evolved. It has been addressed but is still present. The danger of terrorists infiltrating into civil aviation passenger flows has previously been related primarily to foreign terrorist fighters, as was highlighted in resolution 2178 (2014). Currently, terrorist detection is mainly focused on returnees and new forms of threats. However, we must remember that civil aviation is still vulnerable to that previous kind of threat. Therefore, we call on the international community to strengthen cooperation, information-sharing and security measures at,

and within, airports, according to updated and shared standards.

On 26 May, in the Taormina statement on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, the leaders of the Group of Seven confirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation among border agencies and supporting the expansion of the use of advance passenger information (API) and passenger name records in traveller screenings. We acknowledge that many countries in several regions need capacity-building projects to enhance the effectiveness of their fight against terrorism. With specific reference to aviation security, there are objective constraints for the technological transition from pre-existing information systems to the current API system. That transition takes time and means managing different systems for a certain period, but the critical importance of API as an effective tool in the fight against terrorism is undeniable.

Ensuring the safety of international flights and passengers, helping to prevent terrorist attacks and strengthening the effectiveness of law enforcement and judicial action are the essential goals of resolution 2309 (2016). Implementation is now key. We are dealing with a global threat, and it is therefore necessary to not only share international standards but also expertise and best practices in implementation. In that regard, the assistance and technical support provided by ICAO and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate are fundamental.

Finally, we look forward to broad agreement among Member States on the approval of the Global Aviation Aecurity Plan as a further significant step forward for the security of civil aviation. Italy will continue to support the optimal implementation of all the necessary requirements to enhance effectiveness in preventing terrorist attacks, bearing in mind that the security of airports and flights is a civil right and a fundamental reaffirmation of our collective freedom.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, we thank Ambassador Aboulatta, in his capacity as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Ms. Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, for their briefings.

Once again, Bolivia reiterates its categorical condemnation of all terrorist acts in all forms and manifestations, as they are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever or whenever they may be and whoever commits them. Terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace, social coexistence and international security. Terrorist acts that are related to civil aviation security are not only a threat to the safety and confidence of people, but also to the economy and trade between States.

The need for cooperation among States is clear, so as to avoid any attempt by terrorist groups to capitalize on possible safety deficiencies at airports. We therefore reaffirm the need to evaluate whether or not current international standards are effective when it comes to their implementation. At the same time, due to the nature of terrorist acts, those standards must evolve and adapt to current situations.

We highlight the progress made to date since the adoption of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, through various international instruments, such as the 1988 Protocol to the Montreal Convention Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, which expands its provisions to include terrorist acts committed in airports providing services to international civil aviation, the 2010 Protocol to the Beijing Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation, as well as resolution 2309 (2016), which encourages further coordination with the International Civil Aviation Organization.

As set out in resolution 2309 (2016), Bolivia, in coordination with the International Civil Aviation Organization, is implementing effective national mechanisms to adequately enforce aviation safety measures to counter such threats. Our national criminal code categorizes terrorism as any act that aims to provoke a state of alert or collective panic among the population. It also stipulates that appropriating an aircraft or vessel through violence, threat or any other form of intimidation is an act of terrorism.

In that vein, we have worked on implementing the national civil aviation safety programme, which is intended to establish the various responsibilities and levels of coordination among different institutions, public or private companies and State security bodies regarding anything related to the permanent safety of civil aviation, in order to prevent acts of illicit interference, crimes and violations that infringe upon the normal development of aviation activities.

The contexts in which terrorism arises, both locally and globally, are the challenge that the international community faces. In order to overcome that challenge, we call on the Security Council to join forces in the fight against the scourge of terrorism through greater international coordination, while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States within the framework of international law.

Finally, we express our support for the ongoing work being done by both the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as the International Civil Aviation Organization.

It is a fact that there are still challenges for States, but we are sure that besides holding dialogue on aviation security and cooperation with respect to information exchange, only through capacity-building will we be able to guarantee the well-being of the population with respect to the use of civil aviation services.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank Ethiopia for its able leadership this month and for highlighting the importance of aviation security. I also express my appreciation to the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Liu, and the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, for their informative briefings. I would especially like to express my gratitude to Ms. Fang Liu for her official visit to Kazakhstan last month. Her meetings with officials of my country augur well for our close collaboration in the future.

Kazakhstan is committed to aviation security and protecting civil aviation facilities and critical infrastructure for combating international terrorism from terrorist attacks, in the light of the complex and innovative methods used by terrorist organizations. My country's relevant competent authorities have intensified their interaction with the relevant regional and international organizations and taken vigorous and prompt measures to eliminate threats to international flights, in accordance with resolution 2309 (2016), which calls on Member States to take immediate measures to eliminate any gaps or loopholes.

In 2016, the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTED) carried out an assessment of Kazakhstan's implementation of the basic counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council and found them to be quite effective. The European Commission also carried out a technical safety assessment in Kazakhstan and confirmed that the country was effectively implementing ICAO standards.

In addition, in accordance with the national transport law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, our civil aviation committee is considering the installation and maintenance of an information system for collecting and processing air passenger data. We are working to introduce the Advance Passenger Information System and carrying out a study of the capabilities of the Interactive Advance Passenger Information System, which is becoming the new standard. We are undertaking that exercise with the assistance of experts from CTED, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. In the near future, intend to ratify the Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation.

Because the nature of attacks on civil aviation infrastructure is constantly changing, Kazakhstan believes that it is necessary to constantly review, harmonize and consolidate legislation and actions with neighbouring and regional countries that share constant flow of air traffic. That applies to the international sphere, as well.

We call for the development of an active exchange of information between Member States and international organizations on new methods and practices in the field of aviation security. Special vigilance is called for with regard to preventing direct attacks, smuggling explosives onto aircraft, using drones to carry lethal materials or vehicles laden with explosives, the hijacking of planes and attacks with mortars of short- and long-range anti-tank missiles. All of that requires thorough screening, the creation of stand-off security zones, clear operational roles between armed forces, special security and the police and situational crisis training of civilian populations. In order to help countries fight those challenges, comply with norms and establish uniform procedures, capacity-building will be necessary by way of well-qualified personnel, training, equipment for detection and destruction and early warning.

In conclusion, we reaffirm Kazakhstan's commitment to implementing effective measures to counter and mitigate terrorist attacks against civil

aviation by strengthening partner relations and applying the norms and standards established by ICAO.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, for their comprehensive and informative briefings.

Japan co-sponsored resolution 2309 (2016) with a view to enhancing aviation security together with the international community. Civil aviation has been an attractive target for terrorists over the past decades, as we witnessed with the attacks in the United States of 11 September 2011, and more recently in Brussels and Istanbul last year. Terrorists will use all available methods to attack civil aviation. We therefore need to use all available tools to prevent them from doing so. While aviation security covers a wide range of areas of activty, information exchange is among the most basic and effective.

As the briefers pointed out, advance passenger information (API) and passenger name record (PNR) systems should be introduced in order to detect foreign terrorist fighters, in accordance with resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2368 (2017). ICAO's API guidelines and PNR reporting standards demonstrate how useful such systems can be. API includes passport and flight information, while PNR includes passengers' booking information, including itineraries, the names and nationalities of travelling companions and payment methods. That information helps the authorities analyse and detect possible foreign terrorist fighters before they arrive at airports.

However, as Ambassador Aboulatta pointed out, according to the March report of the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, only 57 out of 193 Member States have introduced API and only 15 use the PNR system. Japan calls upon all Member States to employ those systems as soon as possible, as encouraged by relevant resolutions. In order to support such efforts, Japan has provided $2.24 million of assistance to the Asia-Pacific region to promote API and PNR for aviation security. We hope that other Member States will also promote support for the wider use of those systems.

Moreover, API and PNR systems will not be enough. We must collect information on terrorists in order to be able to match the information obtained by API and PNR. Therefore, updating the sanctions lists on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida and populating INTERPOL databases, including stolen and lost travel documents databases, is important. Those databases should be extended to airports and border checkpoints. If those areas do not have access to the databases, terrorists can sneak across borders unnoticed due to the lack of timely notice. However, more than 100 out of the 190 member States of INTERPOL do not use that powerful database to screen travellers at airports and border checkpoints. Therefore, I urge Member States to extend access to INTERPOL databases to airports and other front-line checkpoints in accordance with resolution 2322 (2016).

With regard to aviation security,I would like to take this opportunity to strongly condemn the series of ballistic missile launches carried out by North Korea in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. We demand that North Korea immediately cease all such actions. Those ballistic missiles were launched without any prior notification. They could have catastrophic consequences and pose a threat to aviation security.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of moving towards implementation. Japan is always ready to work closely with other countries to enhance their capacities in counter-terrorism, including aviation security. We must unite against terrorists by implementing resolution 2309 (2016) and related resolutions and further enhancing our counter-terrorism measures.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on civil aviation security and counter-terrorism. Our thanks also go to the two briefers — Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

Civil aviation is important to connectivity, political and cultural exchanges, trade and economic cooperation among nations. In recent years, terrorist organizations have been targeting civil aviation in terror attacks, jeopardizing the safety and security of people and property and undermining the stability and socioeconomic development of the countries affected. Guided by the notion that humankind is a community with a shared future, the international community should scale up international cooperation in civil

aviation and take practical and effective measures to protect the global civil aviation system from the threat of terrorist attacks. In that context, I would like to highlight the following three points.

First, a harmonized set of standards should be upheld to guard against and combat acts of terror against civil aviation. All countries should be consistent in their zero-tolerance and non-discrimination approach towards terrorism — that is to relentlessly suppress terrorist activities regardless of the countries they target or the means they employ. International counter-terrorism operations must fully leverage the leadership of the United Nations in general, and in particular that of the Security Council, adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, strengthen effective coordination, develop a united front against terrorism at the international level and keep the heat up on terrorists — fighting them with an iron hand.

Secondly, as this is a Member State-led process, strengthening developing countries' capacity-building should be prioritized. Developing countries face more challenges in capacity-building to ensure civil aviation security. The international community's priorities in that regard include airport security screening, safety and security risk assessment and on-site response. Developing countries should receive assistance to enhance their civil aviation protection capacity. Meanwhile, it is necessary to respect the sovereignty of the recipient countries and to help them address practical challenges with concrete measures.

Thirdly, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council should be implemented in good faith to scale up international cooperation in protecting civil aviation from terror attacks. In September 2016, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2309 (2016). Pursuant to the resolution, all parties should strengthen the sharing of civil aviation security intelligence and step up cooperation in border control and enforcement. ICAO should encourage States to improve and refine their civil aviation security measures and encourage the international community to invest more in civil aviation security, continue to work closely with the CTC and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate under the Security Council and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and assist Member States in enhancing capacity-building in the relevant fields.

China is an important member of the international counter-terrorism community. China will continue to promote anti-terror cooperation in civil aviation and raise our standards of civil aviation security, in accordance with our counter-terrorism law, national civil aviation security legislation and international conventions. During the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that was held in Beijing in May, the Civil Aviation Administration of China and ICAO signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. China is ready to work with ICAO to scale up international cooperation in areas such as aviation safety and security management.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal welcomes the convening of this briefing, one year after the Security Council's adoption of the historic resolution 2309 (2016) of 22 September 2016. It gives us an opportunity to deepen our thinking on the possible solutions to counter the threats to international peace and security that constitute the growing number of terrorist attacks against civil aviation. The special meeting on the same topic that took place in July had already laid the groundwork for our discussion today. That brings me to congratulate Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and our colleague Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), for their excellent briefings.

It is encouraging to note, in particular in the light of the outstanding briefing made by the Secretary General of ICAO, that the basis of international legislation for aviation security provided for in the Chicago Convention of 7 December 1944 is subject to regular updates by ICAO to adapt to the new security context that is characterized by constantly changing terrorist threats. The crucial role of ICAO in developing international civil aviation safety standards and in pursuing their effective implementation must be strengthened by the joint efforts of Member States, specialized agencies and the aeronautical industry, because when the terrorist threat affects a sector as sensitive as air transportation, it becomes elusive and difficult to prevent. Therefore, constant vigilance and monitoring, based on an awareness of each country and region's own specific context and internal geopolitical environment, become fundamental.

In that regard, in order to be effective, any action taken to combat that phenomenon must be complemented by a strengthening of regional and

international cooperation in the areas of information sharing and border control, as well as technologies for recording, security control and boarding.

Airport facilities such as terminals, cargo areas, baggage handling areas, parking zones and areas for take-off and landing are all targets and vulnerable areas for terrorist attacks. Safeguarding those areas is therefore a major challenge. Similarly, control procedures for passengers and other users is another equally sensitive domain where any failures could provide terrorist groups with an opportunity to plan and implement dangerous acts.

At the national, regional and international levels, Senegal is specifically implementing the Global Civil Aviation Security Plan and its road map, which the Secretary General described. That is the case because Senegal is a regional hub for both civil aviation and counter-terrorism. My country serves as the headquarters for aviation security in Africa, which has led us to cooperate in airspace management, with a jurisdiction covering an airspace of 16,005,000 square kilometers — one and a half times that of Europe. Senegal is also responsible for managing one of the six African flight information regions — the South Atlantic Coastal Region. My country also hosts the headquarters for the African Commission for Civil Aviation, a specialized agency of the African Union, as well as the regional office of ICAO. The African Civil Aviation Commission's mission is to promote civil aviation and ensure that it is safe, secure, profitable and sustainable and respects the environment in Africa. It also implements the ICAO Integrated Air Transport System and develops rules and regulations that are aligned to conform with current international civil aviation legislation.

In line with ICAO provisions, which affirm that every State is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of all security measures aimed at protecting aviation from unlawful interference, the State of Senegal has been working for a number of years on a major programme designed to strengthen civil aviation security on its territory and in its airspace. The policy enabled the National Assembly to adopt a new civil aviation code through its enactment of Act 2015-10 on 4 May 2015, and to establish aviation regulations as a basis for the operational implementation of security measures and procedures. At the national level, this regulatory framework was considerably bolstered by the implementation of the provisions of annex 17 to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme.

Moreover, Senegal's adoption of aviation regulation 9/2016, on advance passenger information, has made it the second most advanced African country on the issue. We have therefore created a platform for exchanging and sharing sensitive information with other States in order to be able to present a solid and united front in dealing with the appearance of new threats and attempts at illicit attacks that make use of aircraft or airports. In that regard, and pursuant to its 2015/1969 decree of 21 September 2015, Senegal has set up a system for monitoring civil aviation security based on the ICAO provisions. It is being effectively enforced and will ensure air transport security in our territory by establishing national civil aviation security programmes. In 2016, Senegal also adopted a national maritime security strategy.

At the subregional level, the State of Senegal has ratified the provisions of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) relating to air transport, including Regulation 10, on civil aviation security, and Decision 11, on the implementation of safety practices and procedures within the WAEMU member States. Each member State reserves the right to apply more stringent measures in order to respond to specific demands arising from the results of a national threat analysis.

West Africa and the Sahel are seeing an increase in terrorist and cyberattacks, alongside an enormous quantity of arms and ammunition in circulation, including rocket-propelled grenades, which is a terrible threat and a source of concern for the subregion. Along with arms smuggling, it is also a threat to the stability of the entire Sahel-Sahara region. If we are to prevent Africa from becoming the soft underbelly of air security, we should ensure the provision of major, multidimensional technical assistance in terms of training of human resources as well as equipment and technology — as provided for in paragraph 7 of resolution 2309 (2016) and as Secretary General Liu called for this morning. In that regard, Senegal reiterates its support for better cooperation among ICAO, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the Counter-Terrorism Committee, including its Executive Directorate, whose human and financial resources should be strengthened, as Mr. Aboulatta, the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, has rightly said.

In conclusion, at a time when Senegal will be opening its state-of-the-art Blaise Diagne Airport in a few months, my delegation would like to encourage further consideration of resolution 2309 (2016), but especially its implementation, in perfect harmony with the other relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation would like to thank Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and Mr. Amr Aboulatta, Chai of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), for their assessments and their informative contributions to our discussion.

Our delegation played an active part in the dialogue on the issue of threats to civil aviation security held in July in the forum of the CTC. In the course of that meeting, the Deputy Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation made a presentation on my country's best practices for implementing international civil aviation security standards. In our view, the CTC's July special meeting gave us food for thought, in particular regarding the remaining gaps in States' fulfilment of the requirements for preventing terrorist acts and strengthening cooperation between States in that area. The fact is that all of these elements are reflected in the Council's counter-terrorism resolutions, starting with the foundational resolution 1373 (2001).

Among the new challenges in this area we are again seeing the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, incidents at airports caused by the actions of insiders and airport staff, the use of increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices, and the danger posed by cyberattacks. The previous arrangement affirmed that when formulating and implementing in practice rules and methods for ensuring aviation security, States should rely first and foremost on work carried out within the framework of ICAO, the international organization competent in these matters. In that context, it will be helpful to be able to rely on ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan, currently being considered, along a road map for its implementation and accompanying programmes and projects.

As we see it, our job, in discussing this topic in the Council, and that of the relevant work in the CTC, is, without duplicating any efforts, to ensure that States are helped to comprehensively implement the relevant standards and recommendations, while taking into account the gaps that have been identified in their national counter-terrorism arrangements. We look forward to continued fruitful cooperation between the Security Council's counter-terrorism bodies and ICAO. We will also be interacting on the issue with the Monitoring Team of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. This process will undoubtedly also involve the newly established United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism, which is mandated to strengthen the coordination of technical assistance both within and beyond the United Nations. Our ultimate goal should be to create a sustainable system for protecting international civil aviation from acts of illicit interference, and the most effective means to that end is the coordinated action of States and international bodies within their respective mandates.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Ethiopian presidency of the Security Council for holding today's important meeting in response to paragraph 11 of resolution 2309 (2016). I should also like to extend my appreciation to Ms. Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), for her briefing today.

The meeting held on 7 July by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism (CTC) on terrorist threats to civil aviation was one of the most important meetings held by the CTC in 2017, given the importance of the topic. As we have heard, that meeting resulted in an important outcome that should be fully respected and implemented.

In that vein, I note the relevance of resolution 2309 (2016), which stresses the important and pivotal role of the International Civil Aviation Organization in the implementation of that resolution and in all areas related to civil aviation and in the implementation of the Convention on International Civil Aviation to protect civil aviation against terrorist risks and threats. The resolution welcomes the work of ICAO to protect civil aviation. It calls on ICAO, within its mandate, to continue and enhance its efforts to establish compliance with international aviation security standards through effective implementation on the ground, and to assist Member States in this regard.

We underscore the need for States to comply with the implementation of resolution 2309 (2016), including all

its provisions, such as guarding against the use of civil aviation as a tool to transport foreign terrorist fighters. It stresses the need for all States to protect the security of their nationals from terrorist attacks targeting civil aviation, in accordance with international law. We also reiterate the need for all States to do what it takes, in accordance with international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to prevent and combat terrorism, including terrorism that targets or uses civil aviation.

In that regard, Egypt has been taking internal measures to protect its people and territory against any terrorist attack that could target civil aviation. Egypt is pursuing its close cooperation with friendly countries and ICAO. Recently, we conducted a comprehensive review of practices in Egyptian airports to ensure the implementation of global security standards, in accordance with the Chicago Convention.

Additionally, Egypt is implementing effective measures to assess risks in Egyptian airports with a view to strengthening security screening and audits, as well as the security of facilities, and detecting and deterring terrorist attacks against civil aviation. Egyptian authorities conduct regular and comprehensive reviews and assessments of those measures to ensure that they manage evolving threats and that they are in line with the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

In that respect, the ICAO aviation audit team has given Egypt a positive assessment for its application of the standard security procedures set forth in the Chicago Convention. Egyptian authorities received a formal letter on 17 August from the Chair of the ICAO audit team, indicating the progress made by Egypt in reaching the highest standards of aviation security.

To conclude, Egypt underscores the need to secure the financial resources required by ICAO to enhance its ability to carry out its functions and assist States in the implementation of the Chicago Convention and the Global Aviation Security Plan. We may also consider that the Fund for Counter-Terrorism finances the projects carried out by ICAO in different States to protect civil aviation from terrorist risks and threats.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Liu, and Ambassador Aboulatta for their insightful briefings.

In light of evolving terrorist threats throughout the world, the enhancement of aviation security worldwide is critical to keeping aircrafts and travellers safe and secure. Today's missile attack on the Kabul International Airport only highlights the need for the advancement of new standards of aviation security. It is not just timely, but necessary. Yet, not all needed improvements to aviation security can be made overnight, especially given that their implementation requires a phased approach and the active engagement of all States.

Among the urgent tasks are the enhancement of overall security with the Advanced Passenger Screening System; the heightened screening of personal baggage, in particular electronic devices, to prevent improvised explosive devices from being taken in the air; the introduction of increased security protocols around aircraft; and the establishment of additional pre-clearance locations.

Resolution 2309 (2016), which Ukraine co-sponsored, sent a strong message to ICAO to further develop its cooperation with the Security Council, in particular with the CTC and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED). That entails a systematic exchange of information on terrorist threats, incidents, trends and mitigation efforts, as well as providing capacity-building assistance where it is needed most.

In that regard, we take positive note of the CTC special meeting held in July and the most recent 2017 ICAO Global Aviation Security Symposium, held this month. Both events facilitated strategic international collaboration in addressing the threat posed by terrorists targeting civil aviation by reinforcing, strengthening and promoting the international framework of aviation security standards. Their findings should be well reflected in national and international terrorism prevention strategies. We therefore encourage ICAO and CTED to continue such cooperation, with the active involvement of the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

Driven by the requirements of resolutions 2309 (2016) and 2341 (2017), Ukraine updated its State programme on civil aviation security in March, in conformity with the recent amendments of the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. It establishes a mechanism for risk assessment at both the national and the airport levels, introduces extensive measures related to the protection of civil aviation from acts of unlawful interference, and in that regard enacts the provision of specialized training for security personnel

to promptly and effectively identify and eliminate threats to civil aviation.

Since a single cyberattack could deal even more damage to the civil aviation system than any other terrorist attack, a special focus under the State programme is given to the protection of critical airport infrastructure from cyberthreats, as envisaged by ICAO Assembly resolution 39-19. A dedicated division has been created within the State aviation service of Ukraine to coordinate cybersecurity strategies, policies and plans with airline companies and share respective information to help identify critical vulnerabilities that need to be addressed.

To check travellers' information against the terrorist sanctions lists, Ukraine has become a participant in the Advance Passenger Information System and supports its universal implementation. In that vein, we have also introduced ICAO-compliant biometric travel documents and equipped our airports with automated systems for their check-in.

The gravity of acts threatening the safety of international civil aviation, especially terrorist attacks, makes them a matter of concern for the entire international community. States should therefore spare no effort to cooperate diligently with the aim of thoroughly investigating those crimes and holding their perpetrators to justice.

One of the examples I must mention is the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 in Ukraine's occupied Donbas. Five countries — Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine — are already working together in the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) on the criminal investigation of that heinous crime. The investigation is still under way. Resolved to prosecute those responsible for this atrocious crime under the most authoritative body, Ukraine and its partners attempted to establish an international tribunal through the Security Council. Yet all our attempts were blocked by the Russian Federation.

This summer, the JIT countries decided that the prosecution and trial of the suspects would take place in the Netherlands. Ukraine and the Netherlands signed a bilateral treaty on international legal cooperation in relation to the downing of Flight MH-17. The treaty constitutes the legal basis for transferring the criminal proceedings from Ukraine to the Netherlands.

Last week, on the margins of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the Ministers of the JIT countries signed a memorandum of understanding regarding political support for prosecuting the perpetrators of the downing of Flight MH-17. By signing the agreement, we pledged to continue working in partnership to implement the demand of resolution 2166 (2014) that those responsible for this incident be held to account.

Together with other JIT countries and with broad support from the international community, we will continue working tirelessly to ensure justice for the victims and accountability for all responsible for this crime — those who supplied the missile system that shot down Flight MH-17, those who gave that criminal order, those who pushed the button and those who supported and funded terrorists then and continue to do so until now. We count on the backing of all States in this just cause.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, one year after the Security Council adopted resolution 2309 (2016). I also welcome the presence and participation of the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Liu, and thank our colleague Ambassador Aboulatta for his briefing on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The lives of thousands of people flying around the world on a daily basis depend upon the implementation of effective security measures in all aspects of civil aviation. Terrorist attacks against air transport and its connected infrastructure can have devastating consequences and have serious collateral effects on various aspects of life for States and their peoples.

The global nature of air transport means that States increasingly depend upon one another in order to implement effective security measures. Cooperation and concerted action are ultimately indispensable elements in order to achieve a reliable and safe environment for civil aviation. States must do their very best to implement the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices, which requires political will.

However, it is worthwhile indicating that, on many occasions, political will is not enough. Many countries simply do not possess the infrastructure, technical capacity, know-how or financial and human resources to comply with the standards. Cooperation therefore becomes essential in their implementation.

We greatly value the assistance provided by ICAO and its No Country Left Behind campaign. We recognize the importance of the support that some countries are able to provide through technical assistance, training programmes and technology transfer.

We note that international civil aviation security involves a long chain of actors, institutions and States cooperating with each other — it is just as strong as its weakest link. In faithful compliance with the international obligations that we have undertaken, Uruguay has established a national civial aviation security committee and has in place a national programme for the same.

In terms of implementing resolution 2309 (2016), Uruguay's national civil aviation and aviation infrastructure authority highlights the importance of training on the issue of security, including monitoring practices, security checks, quality control, strengthening the exchange of information on international threats and, in particular, front-line aviation security personnel, who do not always have access to critical information or the knowledge and training required to manage it. We believe that safety audits are a useful instrument to identify best practices, as well as the need for technical assistance and training. Furthermore, new technologies used for passenger control and checking travel documents, especially what is known as the Advance Passenger Information System, are important elemenst in combating potential acts of air terrorism.

During her visit to our country in April, ICAO Secretary General Fang Liu was able to appreciate the efforts made by Uruguay to implement the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. Ms. Liu took that opportunity to indicate that Uruguay had raised its grade in the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme by over 30 per cent with regard to the previous year, including resolving all the significant concerns that had been highlighted previously.

Uruguay will continue working with respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law to respond to terrorist threats to civil aviation, for we are aware that only a collective effort will make it possible to overcome these new and growing challenges.

Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni (Sweden): Let me join others in welcoming to the Security Council the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Lui. I thank her for her informative briefing. Let me also thank Ambassador Aboulatta for his briefing as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We sit in a city that will forever stand testament to the vulnerability of civil aviation to terrorism and to its tragic consequences. Since the beginning of civil aviation, terrorists have found it to be an appealing target. In the past century, the hijacking of airplanes and the taking of innocent passengers as hostages for ransom or to achieve political gains was one of the most well-known manifestations of terrorism. However, the attack of 11 September 2001 brought about a new and unimaginable manifestation — the use of commercial airlines to commit the mass murder of civilians, both in the air and on the ground. Since then, we have increasingly seen attacks on the aviation industry that seek to spread fear and disruption.

At the same time, international civil aviation is essential. Interconnectivity contributes to the globalization that has spread prosperity and greater understanding between different nations and cultures. Yet with this greater interconnectedness comes interdependence. That is particularly true when it comes to aviation security. Ensuring that aviation is safe and secure for all is truly a common task among nations: we are only as safe as our weakest link.

Aviation security is an area where significant international cooperation is already taking place. We commend ICAO for its role in this work, not least in providing capacity-building and technical assistance to States. We welcome the improvements in the implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices. We also welcome the ongoing work on the development of a new Global Aviation Security Plan that will support collective action in support of aviation security.

We appreciate the efforts of ICAO, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to work together to find synergies among their respective areas of expertise. We need to support each other in effectively enhancing our aviation security. That includes operational cooperation and information exchange, not least on information specifically related to terrorist threats to civil aviation. Further capacity-building in this area is essential.

For the European Union (EU), as for so many others, the attacks of 11 September 2001 were a watershed moment. The new reality led to enhanced joint efforts

on aviation security within the EU. A common legislative framework is now in place across the EU, which incorporates ICAO standards as well as annex 17 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. That legislative framework covers, inter alia, the screening of passengers, airport security, aircraft security checks, as well as other types of screening. The EU also provides support for capacity-building as part of its development cooperation policy. Partnerships with national and regional authorities play an important role in our efforts to build capacity in this area.

Attacks in recent years, including those on airports in Brussels and Istanbul, have shown that there is no room for complacency. We need to redouble our efforts and constantly improve the level of aviation security. Our work on aviation security must dovetail with our efforts to ensure effective and secure border control, airport security and cargo security. In addition, more work is needed to address emerging areas of potential vulnerability, including the landside security of airports and how to deal with new cybersecurity threats. Sweden is committed to working at home and together with our EU partners to ensure that our contribution to the global chain of aviation security is strong.

The aim of aviation security is, first and foremost, preventative. Today's discussion on aviation security is an important contribution to our collective efforts to counter and mitigate the direct threats terrorism can pose to civil aviation. In the broader context, we also need to ensure continued work, in compliance with international law, to prevent radicalization to violent extremism and terrorism in the first place, in line with our common United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as well as the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The newly established United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism will be instrumental in their implementation.

We should not forget that, for generations, aviation has created a sense of adventure and opportunity for millions. Terrorist attacks and threats seek to undermine that sense of wonder, and replace it with fear and distrust. By working together, we can ensure that they do not succeed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first and foremost, to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ms. Fang Liu, for her thorough briefing. I am pleased to see her again at the Security Council table, one year after the adoption of substantive resolution 2309 (2016). I would also like to thank my colleague Ambassador Aboulatta, Permanent Representative of Egypt, for his briefing on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

International civil aviation continues to be a prime target for terrorist groups because of both the potential for human and economic damage and its impact on the media. Without going back over the striking examples of the past, several events this year once again illustrated the seriousness of the threat. One recent such example occurred at the end of July, when the Australian Government thwarted a terrorist attack that was likely targeting a plane.

In the face of such a serious threat, France has continued to work over the past year to strengthen systems in place and its response. At the national level, the measures we have taken to enhance air transport security include enhanced capacity to detect new explosives; enhanced and more rapid response capabilities to airport attacks; the setting up of intelligence cells dedicated to airports; the development of a new management system for background checks; and the adoption of a risk assessment programme for flights passing through third countries. Within the European Union, France recently strengthened its cooperation with the European Aviation Safety Agency through a cooperation agreement reached a few days ago. One of the stipulated areas of cooperation is the security of air transport.

Internationally, France is particularly active in ICAO, where it works on a daily basis under the leadership of my colleague, Philippe Bertoux, who is here today, in order to improve the Standards and Recommended Practices, strengthen international audits and to provide requesting States with targeted technical assistance. France has also assumed the chairmanship of the ICAO Council's Committee on Unlawful Interference, where it will actively contribute to the work of strengthening aviation security. My country is also committed to supporting the work of ICAO and has shown its commitment by providing two experts from the French administration to the ICAO — one in Montreal to support the team in charge of audits and the other at the regional office in Dakar to support the African Aviation Security and Facilitation Plan.

Against that backdrop, the Security Council has an important role to play in calling on all States to meet their obligations in this arena and to promote the implementation of the standards set out in the Chicago Convention. The adoption of resolution 2309 (2016) last year was an important moment to give new impetus to the efforts of the international community to evaluate the risk that terrorism poses for international civil aviation. We welcome the progress that has been made, but we must, and can, still do better.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of close and effective cooperation between ICAO and the United Nations counter-terrorism bodies, particularly the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The special meeting organized jointly by the CTC and ICAO in July was an excellent opportunity for enhancing dialogue between Member States and the relevant international and regional organizations and for identifying ways to promote the implementation of international standards in the field of aviation security. France hopes that this cooperation will continue and hopes to see the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate participate in the work of ICAO in Montreal, once she takes office.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance that France attaches to this issue and by highlight the breadth of France's engagement on what it considers to be a top priority. It is imperative that the international community as a whole continue to mobilize to ensure the safety of air transport. Today's meeting marks a new milestone in that regard.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as representative of Ethiopia.

I would like to express my appreciation to Ms. Fang Liu for her presence here today and for her comprehensive briefing on aviation security. I also wish to thank Ambassador Aboulatta for his excellent leadership of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and for his presentation highlighting what the CTC has been doing in relation to aviation security. We thank the United Kingdom for the initiative of convening this meeting, which marks the one-year anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 2309 (2016), on aviation security.

The aviation industry has often been the primary target of terrorists and a series of measures have already been put in place to enhance aviation security. However, it remains vulnerable to attack as terrorists continue to perceive civil aviation as an attractive target and to seek to exploit real or perceived vulnerabilities in the system. That is why aviation security should remain a high priority agenda for Member States and for the international community. It is also why there is a need for greater international cooperation in closing any loopholes that could be exploited by terrorists. That is what resolution 2309 (2016) calls for.

In that regard, we appreciate the briefing we received today on the implementation of this important resolution, which deals specifically with terrorist threats to civil aviation. The resolution affirms States' responsibility to ensure the safety of air services operating within their territory and calls on all States to work within the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to ensure that international security standards are reviewed, updated, adapted and put in place based on current risks, pursuant to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation.

However, as all colleagues mentioned earlier, it is very clear that not all Member States have the same level of capacity to implement those provisions of the resolution that have resource implications and require more sophisticated technical know-how. Therefore, assistance in the delivery of effective and targeted capacity-development, training and other necessary resources, technical assistance, technology transfers and programmes are needed to enable all States to achieve the objectives set out in the resolution.

There is no doubt that no single Member State, big or small, can carry out the responsibilities outlined in the resolution, given the globally interconnected nature of aviation and the magnitude of the threat posed. That is why strengthening cooperation and collaboration and sharing experience in regards to developing security-check technologies and regional and international cooperation on border control, law enforcement and criminal justice continue to be extremely critical.

In this context, the close cooperation between ICAO and CTC and between ICAO and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) is very important. It is encouraging to note that aviation security issues have been continuously addressed in CTC/CTED country assessments and reports. We also commend the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on terrorist threats to civil aviation, held in July, which afforded the opportunity

to look into existing good practices, identify gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to aviation security, and consider the responsibilities of ICAO, Member States and international and regional organizations in promoting the effective implementation of resolution 2309 (2016).

We believe that today's meeting will enable us to reflect on the progress made in implementing the resolution and applicable ICAO standards, and on challenges and opportunities in relation to aviation security, and to explore possibilities for more tangible collaboration and cooperation, at both the regional and the international levels. We sincerely hope that States will continue to develop partnerships aimed at building capacities and facilitating technical assistance delivery, and that ICAO, CTC, CTED and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force will also continue to strengthen their cooperation in that regard.

As Ethiopia is living in a volatile neighbourhood that is facing threats of terrorism and violent extremism, attacks against civil aviation by terrorists are not remote possibilities for us. They are real threats and they have already happened in our region. Having one of the biggest airline groups in the region, Ethiopia attaches great importance to aviation security. I wish to express our firm commitment to cooperating with other States and to working with all the relevant stakeholders in the contexr of regional and international cooperation frameworks.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Ms. Fang Liu to respond to comments.

Ms. Fang Liu (*spoke in Chinese*): I again thank the Security Council for its invitation to our organization to brief members on international civil aviation security. I thank all representatives for their remarks, their attention to civil aviation, security measures, their recognition of our work and their support.

I concur with the remarks made today concerning the importance of civil aviation security and the need for international cooperation in that regard. We also need to implement resolution 2309 (2016) effectively. We need to invest more in aviation security, in particular in technical support and training for developing countries, so that all countries can effectively implement the civil aviation standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in order to better safeguard aviation security.

We also recognize the need to support ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan and its implementation. ICAO will continue to play a leading role in international civil aviation security and further enhance its cooperation with the United Nations, the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, and the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism so that Member States can be better equipped and positioned to fight terrorism, implement the ICAO civil aviation security standards. I am ready to further engage with the Security Council on aviation security and to brief members on new developments.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8058th meeting
Wednesday, 27 September 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (S/2017/794)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (S/2017/794)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/794, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016).

I now give the floor to Mr. De Mistura.

Mr. De Mistura: I am delighted to see you, Mr. President, presiding over this meeting. I am lucky enough be in the Council in person and not via video-teleconference, owing to the overlap with the recent General Assembly meetings.

Let me update the Council first on the most recent developments, which I am supposed to do, and then move on to the way ahead on the political track and the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). First, with regard to what is happening on the ground, the Amman discussions and the meetings that have taken place very effectively in Astana have created four zones of de-escalation: in the south, in eastern Ghouta, north of Homs, and Idlib province. We also now have two other so-called deconfliction zones, which are being brokered by the Russian Federation in Afrin and eastern Qalamun.

However, the situation remains fragile because we are concerned by the Al-Nusra offensive in Idlib and Hama provinces following the Astana meeting and the heavy fighting that has been taking place there. This includes also, for the first time since April, some air strikes, some of which allegedly hit civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, as well as heavy opposition shelling on civilian towns and the Government controlling Hama and Latakia. We are also concerned at heavy fighting in other places too. So the situation is far from perfect. Nevertheless, we have to admit and we want to reaffirm in this Chamber that the creation of the de-escalation zones is a very important step in the effort to de-escalate the violence throughout the country. We are seeing the results of it.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is being beaten back. Government forces have advanced in the eastern countryside of Hama and Homs and broken the so-called three-year siege, which has been taking place de facto around Deir ez-Zor city. The Government and allies also recently crossed the Euphrates river. Meanwhile, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with the backing of the International Coalition, have made further advances against ISIL, taking control of most of the city of Raqqa, while the SDF-led Deir ez-Zor military council has made advances against ISIL on the eastern banks of the Euphrates. The Government and its allies have reportedly increased their strikes on SDF positions. Armed opposition groups are also involved in battle against ISIL in Dar'a. I wish to recall the United Nations calls for the protection of civilians — and this is the right place to do it — in Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa and elsewhere where fighting is still going on.

In the midst of this intensive military activity, while we all recognize that the fighting against ISIL is crucial, we need to remember that civilians cannot be punished twice. They have already been punished because they have been under the rule of ISIL and, if they happen to be unlucky enough to be there when the fighting is taking place, they are punished a second time. More needs to be done in the field of the protection of civilians. More needs to be done to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure from military assault and to ensure safe, sustained and unimpeded access to all civilians in need in Syria, wherever they are. I am sure the Council will hear more on that point from my colleague and friend Mark Lowcock.

Allow me nevertheless to specifically underline the issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons.

Thousands of them, according to their own families, are still missing, abducted or detained. We have not seen any progress on this issue — neither in Astana, despite several attempts to do so, nor in Geneva. A very large number of Syrian families are suffering from the absence of their own detained or missing relatives and lack, above all, information on their fate. They do not even know if they are alive or not. The time has come to address this issue now as a major priority, particularly in this case when we see a de-escalation taking place.

I also hope that concrete results can be achieved in the near future on the issue of humanitarian mine action. I hate mines. I have had three of my colleagues killed by mines in Afghanistan and Iraq. I have seen mines in action. This would constitute another important confidence-building measure. I note with interest the ongoing dialogue between the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Government of Syria in this regard.

There is a wide consensus that de-escalation arrangements must not lead to a soft partition of Syria, and that Syria's unity and territorial integrity must be fully upheld. I have found many common perspectives through the hundreds of Syrians we are meeting regularly. Syrians of all backgrounds have voiced their own strong rejection of any partitioning of Syria — its territory and its people.

That is why de-escalation should be basically a precursor to a truly nationwide ceasefire and to action on the humanitarian and confidence-building fronts — issues which are covered in paragraphs 12 to 14 of resolution 2254 (2015). The Astana effort and the effort in Amman should be seen as laying the basis for a renewed Geneva process — one that moves from preparatory talks to genuine negotiations on the political future of Syria, as envisaged in resolution 2254 (2015), tackling all four baskets of the agenda, and as welcomed by the Council.

I have engaged both sides, as well as all those who have influence on them, during the opening of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, which has been as usual very useful. I have attended a number of multilateral meetings in its margins, including one convened by the European Union — and I want to thank the European Union for that initiative — with a wide cross section of international actors. I also had the opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., on Monday, while my Deputy, Ambassador Ramzy, visited Moscow yesterday and is still there today. I intend to maintain a high level of engagement with all concerned countries and Syrian parties in the weeks ahead.

We will continue to engage with all participants in the Civil Society Support Room and to draw on the insights of the Women's Advisory Board. Participants from both have strongly underscored to me the expectations of a broad cross section of Syrians for an inclusive political solution reflecting the interests of all Syrians and grounded in human rights, equality and justice. They continue to call attention to the voices missing from the political process, including women who are half of the population, if not more. They should have an equal voice in the decisions shaping the future of their own country.

I wish to confirm today my intention to convene the eighth round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, which I discussed yesterday with the Secretary-General, about a month from now. The precise date is to be determined. It should not be any later than the end of October or early November. I am reaffirming this time frame in order to allow all concerned to use the crucial month from now until then to create conditions for those talks to be meaningful. And I am calling on both sides — both sides — to assess the situation with realism and responsibility towards the people of Syria and to seriously prepare for participation in the Geneva talks without preconditions. I would like to explain exactly what we may mean by that.

First, I believe hat the Government has an interest in and indeed a duty now to genuinely negotiate with an opposition that the Council identified by name in resolution 2254 (2015). Until now, the Government has conditioned its readiness to move from talks to real negotiations on the issue of opposition unity and a commitment to certain essential principles. I also know how important the issue of counter-terrorism is for the Government. But it is precisely at this time, as terrorism is starting to be defeated in Syria — and we are watching it with our own eyes — that we need to preserve those gains on the ground and sustain them through a real and inclusive political process, guided by resolution 2254 (2015).

The Government should therefore be urged to show by word and action that it genuinely wants to have negotiations on key issues — credible, inclusive governance, locally and centrally; a schedule and process for creating a new constitution; and United

Nations-supervised elections — while the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria is reaffirmed and while terrorism is being combatted and defeated. It is important that those States that are friends of the Syrian Government encourage it to show its readiness to move forward, including on the substance of resolution 2254 (2015), the agenda of the baskets, not just in broad terms but in specifics, with details, sequencing and implementation modalities. We know that this will not be easy, but the process has to be started, and the United Nations will be more than willing to be a broker in enabling real negotiations with the opposition.

For its part, the opposition, we believe, also has an interest in and a duty now to signal that it does want to speak with one voice and with a common platform in genuine negotiations with the Government on the four baskets and on the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). No one is asking the opposition to suddenly stop being the opposition, but we are urging the opposition to realize that it is most credible and effective when it stands together and shows readiness to negotiate, which means give and take.

In that regard, there has frankly been a lot of hard work up until now in our Office. We facilitated valuable technical work on the three opposition platforms from May to July. The opposition should be urged now to take the opportunity presented by the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to convene what they call an inclusive Riyadh 2 conference, which we hope and trust will take place in October, before the Geneva talks and before Astana. That conference should be the time and place for the opposition, with the encouragement of those who have influence over it — some of whom are in the Chamber — to ensure that it comes together and presents a strategic approach to the negotiation process towards realizing the vision, which remains the same, contained in resolution 2254 (2015). The United Nations is ready to support this vision and approach in any way it can.

I would like to caution all sides against illusions of victory or dreams of shortcuts. There is no substitute for an United Nations, internationally supported process based in Geneva on a comprehensive and inclusive approach that also helps Syrians to rediscover a modicum of trust and social cohesion after this bitter conflict. We need to remember that hundreds of thousands are dead and that millions carry the physical or psychological wounds of a brutal conflict. Millions have been displaced, either within Syria or beyond, even as some — and we are glad to see this — are trying to return home. Thousands have been detained, thousands have disappeared — many without a trace, and with no progress on the revelation of their fate.

Infrastructure, particularly civilian infrastructure, has been destroyed on an unimaginable scale, and internationally proscribed terrorists groups, even if they are on the back foot today — and they are — have shown their resilience in other places of the world in surviving battlefield reverses and thriving again — which they will or could — if there is no new political compact that enables society to make the transition towards a shared, inclusive and democratic future. The need to address the unmet grievances that exist in Syria is apparent to me from the range of Syrian voices who are aligned neither with Government nor with the opposition but who say that they do have grievances.

That is why the time has come for the focus to return to Geneva, and for the intra-Syrian talks to take place under the auspices of the United Nations, specifically the Security Council. This is the only forum in which the transitional political process envisaged by the Council in resolution 2254 (2015) can be developed with the Syrian parties themselves, with the full legitimacy, which is what the United Nations provides, and the backing of the international community. We have a month until those talks, and we want everyone to work during that month. Let us use it to prepare well for the upcoming talks.

The President: I thank Mr. De Mistura for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: Mr. President, it is an honour to speak to you this afternoon for the first time since taking up my role as Emergency Relief Coordinator.

All Council members around this table are aware of the devastating effects the conflict has had on civilians in Syria. I recognize the strenuous efforts many members have made to promote improvements in the humanitarian situation. I know that the Council has worked collectively for increased humanitarian access and for the protection of civilians, and this remains high on the agenda of the international community, as we saw at the general debate in the General Assembly last week. Humanitarian and protection needs remain both vast and acute across Syria. I pledge to work with

the Security Council and with all sides to improve protection and to get aid to people in need.

I welcome the continued progress in de-escalation following the 4 May agreement signed by Russia, Turkey and Iran. These developments have had a positive impact on civilians in certain parts of south-western Syria, rural Damascus, north-western Homs and Idlib. As my colleague, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, has said, the last round of talks in Astana have set the stage for a further reduction in violence. Nevertheless, we continue to receive reports of violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, and like Staffan, I am concerned about reports of recent fighting and air strikes in Idlib and Hama, which have resulted in significant death and injury and damaged critical civilian infrastructure.

Reports suggest that an air strike yesterday in the Wadi Al-Zaib area yesterday in rural Hama may have killed as many as 80 people fleeing the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). I am particularly concerned about air strikes reportedly hitting schools and hospitals in Idlib. Humanitarian partners told us last week that three hospitals in Kafr Nabl, Khan Shaykhun, and Heish sub-districts are no longer in service, leaving over half a million people without access to medical care. Such attacks result not only in direct human suffering from the attacks themselves, but they also cause unnecessary consequential suffering and death by depriving people of access to medical care for what would otherwise be treatable conditions.

Further to the east, battles against ISIL in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor governorates have resulted in a spike in violence. As the Syrian Democratic Forces continue their advances inside Raqqa city, I am concerned about the estimated 14,000 civilians trapped there. They are squeezed into an ever-smaller area. Civilians need safe passage and access to life-saving assistance. In Deir ez-Zor governorate, air strikes in recent days have reportedly led to the death of scores of civilians, while ISIL is reportedly using civilians as human shields. Nearly 100,000 people from towns in the governorate along the Euphrates have reportedly been displaced owing to the intense fighting since 25 August. More than 50,000 have been displaced in the past week alone. Many have been forced into other ISIL areas, out of the reach of relief organizations, and those who have been able to escape from fighting in those cities, by going north into Kurdish-controlled areas, continue to face restrictions on movement.

As front lines continue to shift, humanitarian access to those in need is also changing. After three years of besiegement by ISIL, as Staffan de Mistura just said, Government of Syria forces in early September gained access to Deir ez-Zor city. New commercial and humanitarian routes have been opened as a result. The United Nations, through our partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent has been able to reach the area by road, and that means that we were able to end the airdrops which, through 309 high-altitude rotations since April last year, dispatched more than 6,030 metric tons of food and supplies to those in need inside the city.

Following a comprehensive review by the United Nations, Deir ez-Zor and the 93,500 people in the city are being removed from the list of those besieged. Some 419,920 people, most of whom, according to UNICEF, are children, now remain besieged in 10 locations across Syria. Of those, 95 per cent are besieged by the Government of Syria; 2 per cent in Fo'ah and Kafraya are besieged by non-State armed groups; and 3 per cent in Yarmouk are besieged by both non-State armed groups and the Government of Syria. While the numbers have been reduced, the plight of those trapped remains severe. Those sieges must be lifted.

More than 1 million people rely on assistance that is provided across conflict lines. We are still unable to reach the vast majority of them on a sufficiently regular basis. As of September, 9,000 people in the three besieged towns of Fo'ah, Kafraya and Yarmouk have been reached, and 25,000 people have been reached in eastern Harasta, Misraba and Modira, but overall, under the August and September access plan, we have reached just 280,500 of the 1.23 million people for whom we have requested assistance.

There have been periods over the past 18 months during which the United Nations has reached more than 300,000 people in a single week. I would like to see such access replicated or surpassed in the future. That will require overcoming constraints posed by bureaucratic delays and blockages by all sides. I note that the first two meetings of the tripartite mechanism comprised of the United Nations, the Government of Syria and the Russian Federation have taken place in Damascus to provide a forum for administrative and security issues. Those are practical developments that can improve the lives of Syrians. Regular programming within Syria allows millions of people to be reached every month through the most direct routes. Inside Syria, regular

programming reaches more than 4 million people each month with food, medicine and other essential items.

Through cross-border programming from Jordan and Turkey, we reach millions more. Since the adoption of resolution 2165 (2004), the United Nations has dispatched more than 16,000 trucks delivering health supplies sufficient for almost 15 million treatments, as well as non-food items for almost four million people and water, sanitation and hygiene support for three million people. Nearly 1 million people per month on average have been given help with food. As the Secretary-General says in his latest monthly report (S/2017/794), those operations complement the critical role played by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations. In addition to providing aid, those organizations provide essential basic services, including education and health.

The situation remains perilous for humanitarian workers in Syria, whether they are United Nations staff or our non-governmental organization partners who face risks of violence every day. As reported by the Secretary-General in his latest monthly report, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed since the beginning of the conflict, including staff members of the United Nations and staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the Palestine Red Crescent Society. More than 50 staff members of the United Nations and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remain detained or missing. International humanitarian law and human rights law set out the responsibilities of warring parties to ensure the necessary protection of all humanitarian organizations, including personnel, facilities and other relief assets. I count on the Council's vigilance and support to ensure the necessary protection of all humanitarian workers in Syria.

At the Brussels conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region held in April some $6 billion was pledged by more than 40 Governments to meet the humanitarian and longer-term needs of Syrians and host communities inside Syria and in the region, but the 2017 United Nations humanitarian response plan remains substantially underfunded. I call on the Council to renew its support for addressing that issue and for ensuring that all pledges be turned into contributions. I have sought the agreement of the authorities to visit Syria so as to see the situation for myself, support the preparation of the 2018 humanitarian response plan and subsequently advocate for resources for it.

Syria continues to face deep and difficult challenges, and the Syrian people remain trapped in a cycle of violence that must be broken. I will be working openly and transparently with all sides to find solutions that place the people at the centre of our collective focus. I look forward to working with the Council to get more help to them and provide them with better protection.

The President: I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our gratitude to Special Envoy De Mistura and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Lowcock for their comprehensive briefings. It is a pleasure to see Mr. De Mistura here again. We welcome Mr. Lowcock on the Security Council for the first time. We wish him success in carrying out his mandate, which has a great impact on millions of people throughout the world.

We regularly told his predecessor, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, that he had the difficult task before him of briefing us on painful situations and assessing their impact on this crisis. He also frankly communicated with us the human and humanitarian repercussions of the various crises and armed conflicts in which those among the civilian population are always the primary victims. In that context, in many cases the persevering, self-sacrificing and courageous work of the thousands of humanitarian workers of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and that of their local partners represent the difference between life and death for civilians trapped by those conflicts, in particular for the most vulnerable groups within the population, such as women and children.

Over the past two years as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, our delegation has often taken the floor in these open meetings because it believes that they offer us elected members the opportunity to report to our electors among the membership the position and opinions of our Government concerning the various issues before the Council. As this is Mr. Lowcock's first time on the Council, we want him to know first hand, at the very least, my Government's views.

Over the past two years, the main focus of Uruguay's work has centred on all that relates to the protection of civilians and international humanitarian

law, and we have continuously advocated that there be no restrictions on the access and the distribution of aid throughout the Syrian territory, including besieged and difficult-to-access areas. We have also continuously requested the protection and security of humanitarian workers carrying out their tasks. Given that there is now a new head of OCHA, we reiterate that extending an invitation to Mr. Lowcock to visit the country would be a very positive gesture on the part of the Government of Syria. It would allow for a smoother relationship with the United Nations to facilitate the normal delivery of humanitarian aid.

I must underscore that the Astana process and other regional initiatives launched in the past few months to end local hostilities have led to a considerable reduction in the level of fighting in the country, through the implementation of various de-escalation zones. We stress that it is imperative that those zones be temporary so as to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

For the fifth consecutive month, we must voice our concern about the fact that we have yet to receive any information on the implementation of the 4 May Astana memorandum. Despite the considerable progress made, it is essential to ensure the unhindered access of the United Nations and of humanitarian aid to those zones, and that people are free to enter and leave those areas at will. That would provide some guarantee that the basic principles of international humanitarian law are being respected.

We welcome the fact that following the previous meeting of the Astana process, the three guarantor countries issued a joint communiqué in which they underscored the need to make use of the de-escalation zones that were established in May to allow for swift, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. Similarly, it is encouraging that it also mentions the need for the parties to the conflict to develop confidence-building measures, including by releasing those who have been arrested or kidnapped, handing over remains and identifying missing persons, so as to create conditions that are more conducive to a successful political process and a lasting ceasefire.

With regard to humanitarian access, we are troubled that we continue to fall far short of meeting OCHA's requirements. We all on countries with influence on the Syrian Government, and in particular the Syrian Government itself, to ensure the smooth, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. To that end, Syria must ensure the full implementation of OCHA's bi-monthly plans, by issuing all of the permits required. The Syrian Government is primarily responsible for making sure that its own population has access to food, water, medicines and supplies until the conflict ends.

Dispensing justice for the hundreds of thousands of innocent victims of the conflict will be crucial for achieving lasting peace in Syria and for ensuring that the entire population can move past the mistakes made during this protracted war. It will also create a compelling future and prevent the perpetrators of serious crimes committed during the past seven years from going unpunished.

In December last year, Uruguay supported the establishment of an impartial and independent international mechanism to assist with the investigation and trials of those responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic from March 2011, including those deemed to be war crimes, such as the use of chemical weapons against civilians. In that regard, we support the request made by Secretary-General António Guterres for crimes committed in Syria to be referred to and tried by the International Criminal Court.

Next month, the Joint Investigative Mechanism will release the findings of its analysis of two incidents, in which the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is up to the Council to determine the measures to be taken to punish those found responsible. If not, the Council risks losing the little credibility it has retained after its management of the Syrian crisis.

Priorities in Syria have been clearly defined: find a political solution to end the war; engage in a peaceful political transition, consolidate local ceasefires and ensure humanitarian access to the millions in need in besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too wish to speak in this open meeting, and not just to share our opinion on the current situation in Syria with the members of the Security Council.

We thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his briefing. We wish Mr. Lowcock every success on the Syrian humanitarian track. We trust that he will address the situation impartially and earn the trust of the parties.

On 14 and 15 September, the sixth international meeting on Syria was held in Astana. It was yet another genuine step taken by Russia, Iran and Turkey to strengthen the cessation-of-hostilities regime and to stabilize the overall situation in Syria. Parameters for all four de-escalation zones have been outlined. The calm in south-western Syria is maintained through constructive cooperation with the United States and Jordan. The level of violence continues to drop. We continue to underscore the temporary nature of the de-escalation zones. It is unacceptable to speculate that such zones are a veiled attempt to divide Syria into spheres of influence. We view those allegations as an effort to discredit the Astana process.

The territory under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is dwindling. The Russian air force continues to provide support to the Syrian Government to combat that threat. Following its besiegement by rebels for many years, the siege of Deir ez-Zor has been lifted. However, we see attempts to hamper action to prosecute fighters and drive them out of the city. That is at odds with the stated goal to fully vanquish the scourge of ISIL on Syrian soil. Once again, we caution that terrorists should not be given the opportunity to gain the upper hand. Only through frank cooperation, without hidden agendas, will it be possible to eradicate terrorist hotbeds.

That, by the way, also pertains to countering Jabhat Al-Nusra and its clones. Recently, the members of Al-Nusra took action to undermine the establishment of the de-escalation zones in Idlib and to prevent Government troops from conducting an offensive in Deir ez-Zor. In such conditions, it will therefore be impossible to set up observation points and checkpoints in the Idlib zone before driving out the main Al-Nusra forces. That challenge is currently being addressed effectively. We note media reports that one hospital after another in Idlib is being bombed. Such false information from militants and their sponsors is a well-known tactic used in the Syrian conflict.

The Astana process — a platform that was graciously provided by Kazakhstan — has breathed new life into intra-Syrian talks, under the auspices of the United Nations. We see that it has provided the momentum for the Geneva process, under Staffan de Mistura's stewardship. We look forward to the onset of direct talks between the parties. Much will depend on the opposition's ability to unite, eschew radical positions and finally begin constructive dialogue. Our partners in Saudi Arabia and Egypt have undertaken to facilitate that far from easy task, and we sincerely wish them success. We hope the next round of Geneva peace talks, to be held at the end of October, will succeed.

During the dialogues in Astana, the guarantor countries have not lost sight of the issues of safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, mine clearance and so forth. The agenda also includes topics such as the release of people who have been detained or abducted, proposing reciprocal steps for all the parties involved in the conflict.

We reiterate once again that it will be impossible to achieve effective solutions without involving the Government of Syria in the discussion. Unfortunately, no Syrian representatives were invited to the Syria event organized by the European Union during the General Assembly high-level week. An important step has been taken by establishing a tripartite mechanism involving Russia, Syria and the United Nations, and we hope that it will enable us to find solutions to the many complex issues related to humanitarian activities. For example, we are expecting the process for granting convoys permits to be shortened to two to three days. However, we repeat that transborder supplies will have to be gradually rolled back as humanitarian access expands. We should emphasize once again that we cannot ascribe all the problems related to humanitarian access to the lack of harmonization procedures. Decisions about timing and routes have to be made, and the security situation taken into account, in each specific case. We are aware of instances in which humanitarian convoys have been threatened precisely because of errors in their arrangements.

We cannot countenance risking the lives of humanitarian workers, and we firmly believe that the United Nations should rule out the possibility of sending convoys to regions that are occupied by terrorists, such as Jobar, in the capital, and Idlib. In that regard, it is difficult to understand the recent border crossing by humanitarian convoys through the Bab Al-Hawa checkpoint, which is under Al-Nusra control.

Another long-standing problem is the fair distribution of humanitarian aid. We know for certain that it often ends up in the hands of local warlords, is resold on the black market and used as a currency for purchasing the loyalty of local residents. We know that representatives of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent have received threats and warnings about interfering

in distribution issues. Unfortunately, United Nations representatives often have no idea of whose hands their humanitarian aid is ending up in, and that is unacceptable.

We also know for certain that the need for humanitarian assistance is often calculated incorrectly and is sometimes overestimated when territories controlled by the opposition or terrorists are at issue. That is why we should ensure that local national reconciliation committees play a major role in determining the population's real needs. They are present in every de-escalation zone and include representatives of the Government and armed opposition's local authorities and respected civilians such as clerics, engineers and teachers. Russian officers also participate in the committees as observers. We are ready to organize the engagement of United Nations representatives with the committees to ensure that humanitarian operations can be better planned. Any establishment of parallel authorities in areas under terrorist control would be unacceptable.

The potential of these committees could also be used to enable exchanges of detainees and prisoners. Around 100 people from both the Government and the opposition have already been freed in the southern de-escalation zone. The local national reconciliation committees are currently improving their coordination, and plans are in the works to convene a Syrian peoples' congress, which could play an important role in the Geneva negotiation process alongside the united opposition platform.

In a situation that is being stabilized in many parts of Syria, accompanied by individuals returning on a massive scale, the scope of external humanitarian efforts must be stepped up. What is wanted now is speedy organization to bring in the materials, technology and equipment needed to rebuild the country and restore civilian life. Syrians must be given a sense that peace is coming. We urge the United Nations to increase humanitarian assistance throughout Syria without any slowdown induced by listening to the arguments of those who are trying to exploit the issue of humanitarian aid in order to achieve a political settlement on their own terms. It is a fact that some capitals continue to tie humanitarian assistance, including mine clearance, to progress with the political transition, and we know perfectly well that there is pressure on the United Nations and its entities not to move too hastily to begin reconstruction efforts. On top of that, Syrians are still being targeted with unilateral sanctions, and such collective punishment measures must stop.

We agree with the view that it is essential to provide assistance to Syria's neighbours, which have taken in millions of refugees. However, we also believe that this is, after all, a temporary situation and that expending significant funds to establish refugees in their host countries is ill-advised. Of course, schools for Syrian children in Turkey and Jordan can be built, but surely it would be better to help restore the education system in Syria itself.

We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Raqqa. Tens of thousands of people have been under siege for months, civilian targets are being regularly bombed and hit by heavy artillery and there are no humanitarian corridors. And yet for unknown reasons, the United Nations has still not included this emergency zone on its list of besieged areas. In our view, it should be a matter of no less concern to the United Nations than the issues that the Emergency Coordinator brought up today. In general, we would like to advise the Under-Secretary-General to base his assessments on verified information, as we have already said several times. We trust that his future visit to Syria will enable him to better understand the humanitarian situation in the country.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their briefings and to take a moment to welcome Mr. Lowcock to the Security Council. His dedication to addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria is inspiring. I would be grateful if at some point he could tell us if the Syrian regime has given him a visa yet.

Last week's high-level meeting to address humanitarian needs in Syria was very productive. We thank the European Union for convening it to focus attention on the ongoing crisis that has resulted from the Syrian conflict. The United States was able to announce $697 million in new humanitarian assistance for victims and the host communities that support Syrian refugees. Other nations also made much-needed commitments.

Although there has been some lessening of violence in Syria, this is no time to become complacent. If the Syrian people do not see a political process working in parallel with our de-escalation efforts, the violence will resume. Any gains against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) will only be temporary. Any agreements on paper in Astana will not succeed. The

Syrian people will remain vulnerable and at odds with each other without a political process in which they and the regime can participate in good faith.

Yet, the Syrian regime refuses to come to the table in good faith. Instead, the regime continues to deny humanitarian access to those in need. Monthly United Nations operation plans, including this month's, have been met with "constraints". No cross-line convoys have been able to move in recent weeks, despite having received approval from the Syrian Government at the outset. As the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has reported, the Syrian Arab Armed Forces continue to use chemical weapons against civilians and target hospitals and medical personnel.

Just last week, there were reports of airstrikes in Idlib and northern Hama provinces. The strikes killed at least three medical personnel and damaged a number of medical facilities and civil defence centres. Just yesterday, there were reports of an alleged regime attack on a centre for the disabled in Modira. That attack, if true, is reprehensible. The attacks fit an all-too-familiar pattern in which medical facilities and personnel, as well as the civilians they serve, are victims of strikes by the Syrian regime and its Russian allies. The Russians claim to have leverage over the Syrian regime. They claim to want to expand humanitarian assistance to certain areas, but it is their ally Al-Assad who is denying humanitarian assistance to many people in need in an ugly new low, even for Al-Assad. His regime is authorizing humanitarian convoys to his supporters while preventing life-saving aid from reaching other Syrians. We take our Russian friends at their word when they say that they will resolve those humanitarian problems if they are going to continue to partner with Iran and Al-Assad.

The United States is committed to finding a solution in Syria. We must increase humanitarian access to besieged and suffering communities. We must hold the regime accountable for denying assistance. But the only lasting solution in Syria and the only way to end the violence and defeat terrorism is through a political transition that does not allow Iranian influence to replace ISIS or Al-Assad in power. If the civil war continues, more people will suffer and our gains against ISIS will only open a door to other extremists seeking to exploit the conflict. All of those who have answered the call of human tragedy in Syria have our thanks and our respect, but we must not and we will not forget what is needed in order to truly solve the crisis: a real political process through which the Syrian people gain the ability to ensure their own safety and determine their own future.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me congratulate Mr. Lowcock on his first briefing to the Security Council on Syria. He brings more than 30 years of experience to the position, having led and managed responses to humanitarian crises across the globe, and wise strategic leadership in the area of international development.

We are also grateful to the Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. De Mistura, for his insightful update. We commend him for his exceptional commitment and determination to pursue peace in Syria, and welcome his multifaceted diplomacy to resolve the crisis.

Kazakhstan remains committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and to the continuity of State institutions. We note gradual progress on the political front during the Geneva and Astana meetings, and draw attention to the reduced military activity and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the four de-escalation zones. Astana reaffirms its readiness to further the political process to achieve peace and stability in Syria. I want to underline that the Astana platform complements the Geneva platform and is not intended to replace it.

In searching for an exit strategy, an original approach should be considered as a very effective method to mitigate the situation and prevent further deterioration. Therefore, Kazakhstan calls on all Middle Eastern and Gulf States to join the guarantor countries in ensuring that the ceasefire regime is respected and observed by all parties. If we hope to see further progress, it is important to continue supporting the objectives and gains of the Astana and Geneva negotiations and of the three guarantors.

The humanitarian situation is grave and deserves our attention. Kazakhstan highly appreciates the activities of the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations stationed in Syria, namely, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) . We call on the Syrian Government and neighbouring countries not to impede the access of humanitarian assistance to refugee camps, and we urge Syria to open humanitarian corridors to the besieged areas.

Following a comprehensive review by the United Nations, we were pleased to learn that Deir ez-Zor and 93,500 people in city are being removed from the list of those besieged. However, 419,920 people remain besieged in 10 locations across Syria. We are encouraged by the fact that United Nations humanitarian personnel, OCHA, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the World Food Programme will deliver humanitarian aid to Deir ez-Zor for the first time since earlier this month.

The safe withdrawal of civilians from war zones and their protection should be the priority of all operations. We support the visit by Under-Secretary-General Lowcock to Syria in the near future to see the situation on the ground for himself. The parties to the conflict and the countries supporting them should agree on the release of hostages, the transfer of the dead and the exchange of information on missing persons.

Finally, the Security Council must fulfil its statutory duties by taking more effective and collaborative measures to resolve the Syrian crisis as soon as possible.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and on success in leading the deliberations of the Council.

Having listened to the statements made by our colleagues just now, I cannot help but compare them. The comparison indicates that some of our colleagues know what they are talking about and what is happening in Syria by virtue of being politically involved on the ground and following developments in the situation in Syria. Meanwhile, others who have spoken have no experience on the ground and do not know what is happening in Syria. They base their statements primarily on fabrications of the media and information based on intelligence, which present an image of events in Syria that is unrelated to counter-terrorism and depicts a humanitarian crisis that has been caused solely by the Syrian Government. As I begin my statement, that comparison is very important to keep in mind, so that some colleagues can be made aware that seven years into the terrorist war imposed on my country, it is time to abandon posturing, lies and misleading.

I listened very carefully to the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock. I wish him success in implementing his noble mission as the head of the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I assure him that we are most willing to cooperate with any sincere effort to address the humanitarian situation in my country, as long as the purpose is to help the Syrian people without seeking to exploit their pain for interventionist agendas.

Since the beginning of the terrorist war against my country, the Syrian Government has continued to cooperate with the United Nations and its various agencies to deliver humanitarian assistance to the people who need it, based on the guiding principles for humanitarian assistance, in particular General Assembly resolution 46/182. The main such principle is the need to respect Syrian sovereignty, which has been upheld by all Security Council resolutions on Syria. While the issue of sovereignty is extremely important, some forget to mention it. With all respect, I say to my colleague Mr. Lowcock that he committed that sine today by not mentioning cooperation with the Syrian Government at all in his briefing, as if the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) were cooperating with ghosts in Syria and not with the Government.

Following the issuance of the forty-third report (S/2017/794) of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in Syria, we believe that now is the time to move from a state of denial to recognition that the root cause of the crisis in my country is the emergence and proliferation of armed terrorist groups, at the forefront of which are Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and their affiliated groups. Those groups are summoning tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, who are supported from abroad. They are spreading throughout neighbourhoods and villages in Syria, using civilians as human shields and promoting barbaric ideologies. That has been borne out by the report (see S/2015/358) of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004).

In blatant violation of international law, some States have also imposed unilateral arbitrary economic measures against the Syrian people, which has led to hardship in living conditions and an exacerbation of Syrians' suffering in all areas — economic, social, humanitarian and health. My colleague the Ambassador of the United States has just said that her Government has allocated $860 million for Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. Would it not have been better to

use that money to help the refugees to return to their home country of Syria — to rebuild schools, hospitals and roads — instead of pressing to keep them outside Syrian territory?

A few days ago, we met with Mr. Lowcock and we very clearly conveyed to him the Syrian Government's concerns with, and observations on, OCHA's recent performance. We did so based on our hope of building a transparent, professional and objective relationship that leads to achieving our common objectives, that is, to help the Syrian people meet their needs, to provide assistance to everyone who needs it and to rehabilitate infrastructure so that refugees and displaced persons may return to their homes once security and stability have been restored throught the efforts of Syria and its allied countries and friends.

First, the relationship that we hope to achieve with the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies is a lawful relationship that respects the guiding principles for humanitarian assistance. Second, it is an ethical relationship based on the non-politicization and non-exploitation of the humanitarian situation to exert pressure on the Syrian Government. Third, it is a relationship of partnership and cooperation that recognizes the efforts of the Syrian Government to deliver assistance and to overcome the barriers that obstruct assistance delivery. Fourth, it is a realistic relationship that recognizes that the real reason behind Syrian suffering is international terrorism, in addition to the unilateral and arbitrary collective economic measures imposed by the United States, the European Union and other countries against the Syrian people. Fifth, it is a credible relationship that recognizes that the illegal actions of the so-called international coalition are increasing the suffering of Syrians through killing thousands of civilians and destroying infrastructure. Sixth, it is a credible relationship that recognizes that dubious sources and sources linked to terrorist organizations cannot be relied upon in assessing the humanitarian situation in Syria. And it is a relationship that rejects treating Syrian pain as a commodity, recognizes that donor conferences are just for show, and rejects the exploitation of this humanitarian situation by donor countries to implement their political agendas, and calls upon them to fulfil their commitments. The proportion of pledged assistance is yet to exceed 33 per cent. It is also a relationship that acknowledges that the linking by some countries of financing for the humanitarian response with political conditions contradicts with rules and principles of humanitarian work and undermines the role of the United Nations in this domain.

Two years ago, I drew the attention of the Council to an aerial strike by the so-called international coalition — and I mean by that American aircraft — on a school for disabled chidren in Raqqa, killing dozens of them. And now I hear my female colleague levelling accusations that the Syrian Air Force attacked a school for students with special needs in the same area. The relationship I am talking about must not only aim to alleviate the suffering or any form of blackmailing, but must also be based on trust, partnership, cooperation, dialogue, professionalism and credibility — not on the basis of imposing conditions that violate Syrian sovereignty.

Since the beginning of the so-called crisis, the Syrian Government has spared no effort in being involved in sincere efforts to improve access to humanitarian assistance. As an example, my country recently accepted and approved the Resident Coordinator's proposal to establish a mechanism that includes the Syrian Government, the Russian Federation and the United Nations to promote coordination among humanitarian actors active in Syria, as part of the humanitarian response plan and the plans for joint convoys. We also agreed to review and implement measures to deliver assistance to the de-escalated areas. That mechanism held its first meeting in Damascus on 19 September.

The Syrian Government stresses the importance that humanitarian assistance not be limited to destabilized areas; they must also reach areas liberated by the Syrian Arab Army and its allied and friendly forces, particularly in Deir ez-Zor, eastern Aleppo and other places. We very much appreciate the important assistance provided by the Government of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Some want to fight Russia in Syria, Iran in Syria, and our allied forces in Syria.

I also listened carefully to the briefing by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura. I would like to point out that, speaking in the general debate at the General Assembly a few days ago (see A/72/PV.19), Syria's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that the policy of the Syrian State since the beginning of the terrorist war imposed on us has been based on two major pillars, namely, counter terrorism and working diligently and

consistently to achieve a political solution that ends the bloodshed and restores stability, in continuation of the national reconciliation process that has proven successful, having allowed thousands of displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes. To a great extent, that has contributed to improving the living conditions of large numbers of Syrians, who have suffered too much from terrorist crimes.

My country's Government has demonstrated a serious commitment to the Astana and Geneva paths. We have attended seven rounds in Astana and seven rounds in Geneva. And yet some still say that the Syrian Government is not serious about its enegagement in the political process. What the hell were we doing in each of those seven rounds? My country views positively the Astana path and the resulting identification of de-escalated areas, in the hope that we will reach a real end to hostilities, including separating terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Al-Nusra and others from those groups that have agreed to join the Astana path. What is wrong about that? Is it not compatible with the Security Council resolutions?

In the same vein, my country's Government reaffirms its commitment to the Geneva process and seeks to advance it. The Syrian Arab Republic delegation participated in every round of the Geneva talks, seriously and responsibly. We recently had a very useful round with the Special Envoy and his team, where we focused on two main topics: combating terrorism and meetings between constitutional law experts.

In conclusion, my country's Government reiterates that it will continue to relentlessly combat international terrorism across the entirety of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic — I repeat, all of its territory. We stress our long-standing position that the solution to the crisis in Syria is a political one based on intra-Syrian dialogue, under Syrian leadership and without external intervention or preconditions.

The President: The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I want to respond to a couple of points that have been made so that we set the record straight.

Russia's assertion that we should see an end to the cross-border assistance due to gains made in access is false. Mr. Lowcock just briefed the Council that in August the United Nations was able to reach only 280,500 people with inter-agency convoys — out of the 1.3 million requested. That is only 21 per cent. Meanwhile, the United Nations reaches more than 1 million people cross-border each month. Those are 1 million people who would be left without anything if we ceased cross-border aid. Meanwhile, the Syrian regime continues to remove medical items from convoys and artificially reduces the beneficiary numbers. Those actions are not demonstrations of goodwill from the Government, nor are they a Government we can trust. Now is not the time to reduce our tools to reach people in need. Syrians have suffered for nearly seven years. In short, cross-border assistance must continue in order to save millions of people from death and destruction.

I would also like to say that so many of us want to see an end to the Syrian crisis. We have all watched too many people suffer, we have all met in the Security Council too many times to discuss the situation. But I would like to explain to our Syrian counterpart that the refugees did not leave Syria just because of terrorists. I went there to speak to refugees in Jordan. I spoke to refugees in Turkey. And all of them, whether they were in a camp or not, said that their bigger fear was the regime. The reason they left Syria was out of fear of terrorism, but also out of fear of their very own Government.

Mr. Ja'afari was talking about aid. It is actually $697 million that is going to host countries. We are giving that money to host countries because we know they take care of their people. We have seen proof that they take care of their people. We would like to give that money to Syria. We would like to give that money to its Government — if we can see proof that it is taking care of its own people. Trust has to be earned. It has to be taken based on good faith and goodwill. We have not seen that. We are not giving up on seeing that, but there is no way that he can come to the Council and talk about the fact that anyone is doing anything politically in the situation. The truth of the matter is that the only political thing we all want is for Syrians to be able to go home and live under a Government that takes care of its own people. He must give us proof that they are doing good by their people. Give us proof that Syrians are better off for being back in Syria, and not in Turkey or Jordan — because right now they are better taken care of in Jordan and Turkey than they have ever been in Syria. They deserve to go home. They deserve to

feel safe. And they deserve to be in a place where the Government takes care of them.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I do not intend to engage in polemics, but we need to get to the bottom of the statistics with regard to the number of people in Syria who have access to humanitarian assistance and people who have received assistance from the United Nations. I think that this is one of the challenges that the new Under-Secretary-General will have to deal with. I remember the last time we discussed the matter of Syria and humanitarian access in the Consultations Room with a representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), who provided us with compelling data on the number of people receiving humanitarian assistance. Thanks to assistance provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic — unless I am mistaken — it is not hundreds of thousands, but 5 million people who received assistance thanks to OCHA cooperation with the Syrian Government. I do not wish to dispute the figures, but I would like us to get to the bottom of the statistics. I would ask that Mr. Lowcock address this matter. Let us, so to speak, synchronize our watches on this issue.

The President: The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for requesting the floor once again.

First, a scandal concerning WikiLeaks documents has revealed the intentions of the United States Government to overthrow the regime in my country since 2006. The WikiLeaks documents have been published in the United States, and the book is available on Amazon for whoever wants to acquire it.

Second, in her memoir, Hillary Clinton confesses that it was the United States Administration that created Da'esh, Al-Nusra, Al-Qaida and others. Many books written in the United States and Europe have all pointed to the manipulation of Islamic political terrorism, particularly to undermine Governments in our Arab and Middle Eastern region.

Third, have we forgotten about what happened in Iraq? Can we forget the scandal of the invasion of Iraq and all the resulting afflictions in our region and in that country?

Fourth, who asked and permitted the so-called international coalition forces to enter my country, and what is the United States military doing in parts of the national territory of Syria? Is there any justification for that? How can the sovereignty of my country be militarily violated in many areas, in a blatant and extreme violation of international law? What are American forces doing on our land and who asked them to come?

Fifth, why has the United States Pentagon run an operations room in Amman since the beginning of the crisis in my country? Is it not to train terrorists and send them across the border to my country?

Sixth, have we forgotten that the former United States Administration spent $500 million to train a mere 39 terrorists to liberate Syria from its ruling regime? Ultimately, those 39 terrorists joined Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front with their American weapons.

Seventh, who attacked the Syrian Army position in Jabal Thurdah, in Deir ez-Zor, on 17 September a year ago? Was it not the United States Air Force that attacked the Syrian Arab Army position in Deir ez-Zor that was protecting 300,000 civilians there from Da'esh? What was the result? The American attack on the Syrian Arab Army position in Jabal Thurdah allowed Da'esh to seize the position and attack Deir ez-Zor for an entire year. This happened again recently.

On 21 September, the Syrian Defence Ministry and the Russian Defence Ministry announced that Deir ez-Zor would be liberated from Da'esh within a week and that our army was at the gates of that city. The Russian and Syrian air forces have eliminated 850 Da'esh terrorists in Deir ez-Zor. The terrorists have withdawn and the Syrian Arab Army has regained control of Deir ez-Zor and the surrounding areas. It is easy to imagine what happened next. The international coalition, led by the United States, ceased its operations in Raqqa, which is the stronghold of Da'esh, and pushed the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces, which it supports, to Deir ez-Zor, which our army was liberating. It is almost as if the Americans were racing the Syrian Army to reach Deir ez-Zor instead of fighting Da'esh in Raqqa.

There were, of course, aerial images captured by our ally and friend, the Russians. These satellite images reveal American troops and the Islamic State in Iraq

and the Levant forces exchanging locations without fighting. Helicopters transported Da'esh leaders to some unknown location.

What I want to say is that the American and European conduct now and their attitude towards what is taking place in my country goes against all resolutions that the Security Council has adopted since the beginning of the crisis in Syria on the political situation in my country and on counter-terrorism.

The United States Government must be made aware of and understand that we are a sovereign State, just like the United States itself. We have no desire to fight the United States, but we want the United States to change its erroneous policies towards my country. What benefit is there to Syrians if millions of us remain outside the country? My colleague said that the Syrians have fled the practices of the Syrian Government, and I now say before everyone that the Syrian Government wants the host countries to return the refugees to our country. If millions of Syrians are to return with dignity, we must lift the coercive unilateral sanctions so that those millions can find work opportunities, manufacturing facilities and a dignified life, instead of keeping them in neighbouring States.

As we have said before, the Syrian Government is being blackmailed. Either it must make concessions, or the situation of refugees and the so-called moderate opposition — which is genetically modified, as we told Mr. De Mistura — will continue. It is blatant blackmail. That is not how political solutions work; they must be based on our assistance as a Government, and not work against us as a Government and exploit the humanitarian situation to exert pressure on us.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8059

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8059th meeting

Thursday, 28 September 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; and Mr. David Scharia, Officer-in-Charge of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Voronkov, Mr. Scharia and Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

Mr. Voronkov: I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for organizing today's important meeting, which marks the sixteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001). Allow me to start by remembering the tens of thousands of victims of terrorism around the world.

It is an honour to brief the Security Council for the first time as Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT). I thank all 15 members of the Council for their strong support to the creation of the OCT — the very first reform initiative of Secretary-General Guterres. As he said last week in the General Assembly,

> "National and multilateral counter-terrorism efforts have indeed disrupted networks, reclaimed territory, prevented attacks and saved lives, but we need to intensify this work. Stronger international cooperation remains crucial against terrorism." (*A/72/PV.3, p. 2*)

I am strongly committed to the Secretary-General's vision and look forward to working with the Security Council to achieve this goal.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the able leadership shown by Ambassador Aboulatta of Egypt, as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. I look forward to working closely with the Committee and its Executive Directorate (CTED) to build a strong partnership among all General Assembly and Security Council-mandated bodies to promote the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and all relevant Security Council resolutions.

The new Office of Counter-Terrorism established by the Secretary-General, which I head, intends to make a qualitative difference in our support to Member States by bringing leadership, mobilizing resources and developing, together with United Nations entities at Headquarters and in the field, a coherent and well-coordinated one-United Nations framework to counter-terrorism and prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Support and assistance for Member States are the key words in this regard.

In order to meet this goal, I intend to work closely with all States members of General Assembly, the Security Council and all other relevant organs and bodies of the United Nations. Listening and acting on their priorities will be my priority. That is why I held more than 50 high-level meetings with Member States and international and regional organizations last week. I also listened carefully to the statements delivered in the General Assembly, in which counter-terrorism was clearly one of the highest priorities for the majority of Member States.

From these consultations and statements, we have already identified six key areas that are fully aligned with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Council's priorities, namely, strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation; preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism in the context of Pillar I of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; addressing the terrorist use of the Internet; enhancing intercultural dialogue; addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters; and increasing the exchange of information and good counter-terrorism practices. I will continue listening in order to build, together with the Security Council and all relevant United Nations entities, an effective, future-oriented and balanced counterterrorism programme to support Member States.

Since 2001, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate have resolutely contributed to supporting Member States in the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). Leveraging their respective comparative advantages, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) has also contributed significantly to that effort. Now it is high time to bring together our collective efforts. I therefore welcome the growing emphasis that the Security Council is placing, in its resolutions and presidential statements, on ensuring that United Nations entities work closely together in addressing the terrorist threat. This must be followed by concrete actions and initiatives, respectful of mandates and done in the spirit of collaboration from the very start.

Allow me to cite four examples of what the two constituent parts of the OCT — the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, of which CTED is a core member, and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre — are already doing.

First, our 12 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force inter-agency working groups represent a good example of counter-terrorism coordination in action. This means exchange of information, the identification of threats and challenges, and the development of all-of-United Nations projects. Our new Office of Counter-Terrorism intends to further mainstream the all-of-United Nations approach to our counter-terrorism efforts across the United Nations system both at Headquarters and the field. This strengthening of coordination and coherence will be the highest priority of the Office of Counter-Terrorism .

Secondly, through our CTITF Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group, we have developed, as mandated by the Security Council, an all-of-United Nations CTITF foreign terrorist fighters capacity-building implementation plan that now includes over 50 projects from 13 United Nations entities, addressing the entire life cycle of the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon. Leveraging CTED's comparative advantages, capabilities and knowledge of Member States' needs and priorities, these projects have been thematically and geographically ranked by their criticality so as to ensure an impact on the ground and efficient use of donor resources.

Thirdly, as requested by the Council, the OCT United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre is implementing the all-of-United Nations Integrated Assistance for Counter-Terrorism initiative in the Group of Five for the Sahel, as well as in Nigeria and Mali. In mapping the priorities and needs of those countries, close coordination and input from CTED have been critical.

Fourthly, resolution 2242 (2015) calls for the greater participation and leadership of women in developing strategies to prevent terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism — a substantial component of Pillar I of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. As called for by the resolution, the CTITF is integrating gender as an all-of-United Nations cross-cutting issue in its work, and created a dedicated CTITF Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender, chaired by UN-Women.

We must recognize that there are four important spheres of United Nations activity that need to be aligned if we are to effectively develop a coherent and well-coordinated all-of-United Nations framework for our future counter-terrorism efforts, namely, the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, with their international peace and security mandate; the General Assembly, which brings together our common efforts through the consensus-based Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, its review resolutions and international counter-terrorism legal instruments; the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, which now includes the Office of Counter-Terrorism; and the 38 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that directly or indirectly contribute to our efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism in support of the balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

These four spheres of United Nations activity will need to be more closely aligned if we are to build, as the Secretary-General stated before the General Assembly last week, "a new international counter-terrorism partnership" (*A/72/PV.3, p. 2*).

For their part, Member States will also have to mobilize the political will and resources necessary to backstop this effort, especially through the full implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions and counter-terrorism Conventions.

Our new Office of Counter-Terrorism stands ready to be strongly engaged in this effort, and I look forward to hearing the Council's views on how we can move forward together in pursuit of this goal.

I commit to doing my utmost in this regard and thank all Council members for their support.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Scharia.

Mr. Scharia: Allow me to begin by thanking the Ethiopian presidency and the Russian Federation for supporting the inclusion of this topic on the Council's agenda and for inviting the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to address the Council.

On behalf of CTED, I wish to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Voronkov on his appointment as head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. CTED looks forward to strengthening its partnership with him and his Office.

Sixteen years have passed since the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), and terrorism today still affects us all. No single country can claim to be invulnerable to it.

As the Council is aware, since its establishment CTED has been tasked with providing the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) with neutral and independent expert assessments of Member States' implementation of that resolution and subsequent resolutions on counter-terrorism. One of the principal tools it uses is the country visit, a highly collaborative process that involves experts from many partner organizations. The visits are designed to help Member States develop an effective road map while also avoiding duplication of effort.

Our assessments bring to the CTC and all our partners in New York and in the field the most updated assessment of Member States' counter-terrorism situation. They also serve as a practical way to discuss current trends with national experts and to advise Member States on developing and implementing national counter-terrorism strategies.

Since the beginning of the year, CTED has visited 16 States. The full list can be found in my written remarks, which will be shared after this meeting. Seven further visits are scheduled for the remainder of this year, more than in any other equivalent period since the Committee's creation.

CTED has now conducted 133 visits covering 96 States, including 45 visits since its previous review. Much has been accomplished through this process. New national and regional laws have been enacted, new institutions established and capacities strengthened. This progress reflects not only the impact of resolution 1373 (2001), but also the determined efforts of Member States to comply with their obligations.

And yet many States still do not have all counter-terrorism measures in place. Many CTC recommendations still await action.

As the Council is aware, the recommendations are usually divided into two categories: those that require technical assistance and those that do not. Over the years, many of our partners have delivered technical assistance on the basis of the Committee's recommendations and integrated them into their work programmes. However, the Committee's recommendations could be acted upon much more rapidly and much more widely.

The establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a strong mandate on prevention of violent extremism and capacity-building, provides an opportunity to strengthen the links even further and shorten the time period between our assessments and the delivery of assistance. We look forward to discussing ways to strengthen those links with Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and his Office.

But let us make no mistake: as much as we invest in capacity-building, we should avoid any perception that technical assistance is a precondition for implementing binding Council resolutions. The Council may wish to consider ways to encourage States to implement CTC recommendations, especially in cases where technical assistance is not the reason for the lack of implementation or when States are visited more than once.

These are not regular times. The Council has adopted six new resolutions on terrorism in a short period of time, an unprecedented achievement and show of consensus. CTED has contributed to their elaboration. One notable example is CTED's development of the comprehensive framework on counter-narratives, which served as the foundation for resolution 2354 (2017). CTED, relying on its thematic expertise and guided by resolution 2129 (2013), will continue to advice the CTC on the implementation of these resolutions. CTED will also promote them. It will also continue to integrate them into its work streams and identify challenges as well as practical ways to overcome them.

In this regard, I would note that CTED recently updated its technical guide, which serves to strengthen and deepen CTC assessments and helps Member States prepare for them. It contains the most updated advice

on practical ways to implement all the new resolutions. It is now available for download in English on the CTC website.

The new resolutions also require CTED to prepare analytical reports in a wide variety of areas that require new and constantly developed expertise. New areas for CTED include foreign terrorist fighters, the use of digital evidence and battlefield evidence, new border-control measures, including advance passenger information and biometrics, the use of the Internet by terrorists, the role of women and the human rights aspects of all these issues.

All United Nations bodies can benefit from CTED assessment and analysis. Let me stress that most CTED work products, including in particular its thematic and regional analysis, are not confidential. As demonstrated in the multiple open briefings we held, including meetings on Iraq, CTED can and does share its work.

Since its last review, CTED is also mandated to identify emerging issues, trends and developments related to resolution 1535 (2004). Our cooperation with the Monitoring Team and the joint drafting of the five reports of the Secretary-General required under resolution 2253 (2015), as well as periodic exchanges between the two expert bodies, have allowed us to make a valuable analysis of the threat and Member States' responses and to enrich our work on identifying trends and developments. It also allows us better to understand the challenges that Member States face. We are thankful to the Monitoring Team and to the Committee for their cooperation with us.

CTED continues to strengthen its capacity to identify trends and developments, also through its global research network. CTED is able to provide the CTC with research-based policy advice on a range of issues, from the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and the protection of critical infrastructure to the effectiveness of counter-messaging.

CTED also takes great care to ensure that identified trends and developments and the threat assessments provided by the Monitoring Team are thoroughly and consistently integrated into its assessments. I should note also that CTED's analysis of trends and developments is free of confidentiality requirements.

We need to explore ways together to ensure that the entire United Nations system benefits from CTED's analysis, as it is probably the most updated and comprehensive evidence-based analysis in the United Nations system on counter-terrorism capacity, challenges, trends and developments.

Over the past 12 months, CTED has organized four open briefings and four special meetings. These meetings serve at least three important purposes.

First, they bring transparency to the Committee's work. On numerous occasions, Member States, notably States not serving on the Council, have thanked us for these meetings and expressed a strong wish that they be continued.

Secondly, they enable the CTC to forge new partnerships with international, regional and subregional organizations, civil society and even with private-sector actors.

The meeting held yesterday on aviation security (see S/PV.8057) is one example of such partnership. The establishment of the Global Internet Forum by four major companies and its partnership with the CTC is another.

Lastly, these meetings play an important role in policy formulation. Resolution 2370 (2017), on small arms and light weapons, is a good example of the effectiveness of that practice and its role in supporting policy formulation both at the CTC and at the Council. CTED remains committed to our contribution by assessing Member States' implementation, facilitating technical assistance delivery, identifying trends and good practices and advising and promoting the policy decisions of the Committee and the resolutions of the Council.

However, those tasks are also stretching our capacity and resources to the maximum. It is therefore CTED's hope that the Council will provide it with the resources required to fulfil its significantly expanded mandate. The CTED Executive Director Designate, Ms. Michèle Coninsx, intends to submit a report to the CTC, setting out CTED's vision of how the CTC, the Council and the entire United Nations can maximize the impact of CTED and benefit from its work. The debate today serves an important function and will guide us in drafting that report.

Together, we have achieved a great deal since the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001). However, the terrorist threat continues to evolve at an alarming pace. Terrorist organizations continue to demonstrate flexibility and the capacity to quickly adapt their

methods. They are also particularly adept at exploiting new technologies on the Internet — whether to spread their messages, recruit new members, or finance, plan and perpetrate attacks.

More than ever before, the Committee needs a dynamic, agile and responsive body of experts to support and promote its work. CTED will continue to do its utmost to fulfil that role, and is honoured to serve this cause.

The President: I thank Mr. Scharia for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Aboulatta.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): In my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism (CTC), I have the honour to brief the Council on the topic of threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

I wish to thank the Ethiopian presidency and the Russian Federation for supporting the inclusion of this item on the Council's agenda. I also wish to welcome the Secretary-General's recent counter-terrorism reforms, including his establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, led by the Under-Secretary-General. I believe that those reforms will greatly enhance the coordination of counter-terrorism activities, both within and outside the United Nations system.

This month marks the sixteenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the United States and the Council's adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), which also established the CTC to monitor the implementation of its provisions. Since 2005, the CTC has been supported by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), which works to implement the Committee's policy decisions, coordinate the monitoring of the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001), and assess Member States' implementation efforts.

Acting on behalf of the Committee, CTED conducts assessment visits to Member States, with the consent of the host Government. The assessment visits enable the CTC and CTED to engage in constructive dialogue with the visited State; gather an accurate picture of its overall counter-terrorism capacity; and identify gaps, challenges, trends, good practices, and technical assistance needs. An essential part of the assessment process is to identify priority areas for further action, as well as priority technical assistance requirements. The information gathered during the visits is also used to produce global implementation surveys of the efforts of all Member States to implement not only resolution 1373 (2001), but also resolution 1624 (2005), on preventing incitement to commit terrorist acts.

Regarded as the most comprehensive analytical documents on counter-terrorism in the United Nations system, the surveys identify where gaps remain, where the international community might most usefully focus its efforts, and where progress has been made. And Member States have made significant progress in many areas, assisted by an international counter-terrorism legal framework that has itself developed considerably — especially over the past decade — in response to the constantly evolving terrorist threat.

However, many States continue to face significant challenges. Some States do not yet have all the necessary counter-terrorism measures in place. States also face challenges in their efforts to ensure that the measures that are in place are constantly reviewed and amended as terrorists develop new operational methods and techniques. In order to ensure that our assessments continue to serve a useful purpose, we must continue to build upon the dialogue that has been developed between the Council and Member States, through the CTC and CTED. Member States should be encouraged to strengthen their efforts to implement the Council's resolutions on terrorism, as well as the recommendations emanating from the Committee's assessment visits.

Our assessments and analysis show that many States lack the necessary capacity and resources to comply effectively with the Council's resolutions. Moreover, our follow-up assessments show uneven progress in implementing our recommendations. It is vital that our recommendations be taken up by our implementing partners and integrated into their work and technical assistance programmes.

In order to be successful, the follow-up process must receive strong support from our implementing partners, including the Office of Counter-Terrorism. At the political level, successful follow-up depends in part on the Council's consideration of States' non-compliance with its counter-terrorism resolutions.

With respect to practical follow-up action, I would recall that our visit assessments are shared with the visited State. CTED may also share the recommendations for further action with its implementing partners and

share the assessment itself, in full or in part, with third parties, with the consent of the visited State. Member States are encouraged to give that consent, as it greatly enhances our ability to identify potential donors and technical assistance providers. Member States should also be reminded of their obligation to meet their international counter-terrorism obligations, for it is in their primary interest to protect their citizens' lives, their borders, and their institutions.

Over the past decade, in response to the rapidly evolving terrorist threat and operational landscape, the Committee's country visits have become considerably more demanding and complex. As States increasingly request more focused assessments and follow-up visits, the Committee and the CTC must be able to provide needs-based and flexible responses. Within a relatively short time period, the Council has adopted six new resolutions on counter-terrorism, addressing issues as diverse as strengthening international judicial and law enforcement cooperation, countering terrorist narratives, countering the use of information and communications technology for terrorist purposes, human trafficking for terrorism-financing purposes, terrorist threats to civil aviation, protecting critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks, building public-private partnerships and preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons.

All those resolutions require the CTC and CTED to assist in their implementation and promotion, including through special meetings on themes, such as international cooperation and civil aviation security. The role of CTED thus continues to expand thematically. With respect to international cooperation, for example, its mandate has expanded through the requirements to address biometrics and the downgrading of intelligence threat data.

The addition of new tasks has also brought horizontal and conceptual expansion. In addition to its work of identifying gaps and challenges, CTED is also required to support the work of its key partners in many areas. Through its work on those issues, CTED supports the policy development of the CTC and the Council, assists the CTC in defining its priorities and promotes the Security Council global counter-terrorism policy.

I wish to commend CTED for its readiness to engage proactively in those areas. I also wish to stress the need for CTED to be provided with the necessary resources, both human and financial, to effectively assist the Committee to monitor, promote and facilitate Member States' implementation of all relevant Council resolutions.

In accordance with the relevant Council resolutions, the Committee and CTED will continue to cooperate closely with their key partners, including the Expert Group of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, through regular exchange of information, sharing of reports and the preparation of joint documents and joint statements of the three Chairs to the Council.

The CTC and CTED will also cooperate closely with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and will continue to promote the best international codes and standards, best practices and recommendations for countering terrorism and the violent extremism that can lead to terrorism. We hope that the Office of Counter-Terrorism and our other implementing partners will make full use of our assessments, analysis, recommendations and expertise in their work, including where the facilitation of technical assistance is concerned.

The President: I thank Ambassador Aboulatta for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Ethiopian delegation for including today's meeting in the Council's September programme of work and for your efforts in preparing for it.

Exactly 16 years ago, on 28 September 2001, the Security Council adopted a core counter-terrorism resolution, resolution 1373 (2001). Today's meeting is aimed at conducting a long-overdue analysis of the current situation with regard to the implementation of that resolution and the other Council resolutions that define States' counter-terrorism obligations. In our view, today's discussion is particularly essential in the light of December's forthcoming review and extension of the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and the opinions expressed today will constitute an significant basis for

drafting the relevant Council resolution before the end of the year.

The Russian delegation would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, for his briefing, and to congratulate him on his first appearance in the Council. We are glad to see him here. We are also grateful to Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, and to Mr. Scharia for their briefings and for presenting their approaches to the subject of today's meeting.

As terrorist threats evolve, it is increasingly clear, among other things, that international as well as regional efforts to combat terrorism can hinge on how conscientiously individual States view their obligations. Breaches in counter-terrorism systems do not go unnoticed. Terrorists skilfully exploit such loopholes, and as they flee justice in one country they will inevitably pose threats to other States, especially neighbouring States. Unfortunately, national counter-terrorism legislation is often still at a rudimentary stage even now. For example, the global survey of the implementation by Member States of resolution 1373 (2001) (S/2016/49, annex), prepared by CTED in 2016, points out that the legislation of numerous countries lacks the standards needed for the criminal prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters. A number of countries have not established proper mechanisms for information exchange and interdepartmental coordination or adequate immigration and visa controls. Many are not connected to the relevant INTERPOL databases. There are also shortcomings where the suppression of terrorism financing is concerned. And unfortunately the list does not end there.

We have to take into consideration the fact that the type of terror taking centre stage at the moment does not require significant financial support. It is based on the threat posed by suicide bombers who are subject to potent propaganda. For example, all that is needed to stage an attack is a truck, and of course it is impossible to control such murder weapons. That is why we have to emphasize preventive measures and the fight against radicalization.

Against that backdrop, it is easy to see glaring inadequacies in the implementation of resolution 1624 (2005), on combating incitement to terrorism, including instances of public justification and even glorification. The global survey on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1624 (2005) by Member States (S/2016/50), for example, notes a number of factors that present obstacles to the prosecution of instigators of incitement and other terrorist accomplices, including the fact that in some States such acts are not criminalized or that there is inadequate enforcement of the "extradite or prosecute" principle.

We firmly believe that coordinated measures are urgently needed to identify and remove the terrorist content on the Internet through which propaganda flows and terrorists are actively recruited. We welcome the fact that last week, at the initiative of the United Kingdom, France and Italy, a special high-level event on this subject was organized on the sidelines of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. At the same time, it is paradoxical certain countries were previously been unwilling to cooperate on Russia's draft resolution on combating terrorist ideology, which was focused on resolving these very issues.

We are convinced that in general we have to extract better results from the Council's counter-terrorism resolutions, create a climate that demands more from States on the enforcement front and establish the conditions necessary for strengthening the capabilities of national counter-terrorism systems. We must always remember that Member States have agreed to comply with Security Council resolutions and implement them strictly, and that obligations based on the Charter of the United Nations prevail over all others.

During the previous renewal of the CTED mandate, in 2013, the Security Council underscored the key role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its Executive Directorate in ensuring the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005). We are grateful to the Executive Directorate and to Mr. Laborde, its able leader for the past four years, for the effective work they have done since 2013. We hope that this goal will be a top priority for CTED's new Executive Director, Ms. Michèle Coninsx. We welcome her appointment and are confident that her experience as prosecutor and head of the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit, Eurojust, will be what is needed in her new position.

Overall, in our view, against the background of the reform of the architecture of the United Nations counter-terrorism bodies, a new chapter is beginning for

international efforts in the fight against terrorism. We look forward to close cooperation between the CTC and its Executive Directorate and the Office for Counter-Terrorism. We believe that the information that has emerged from CTED's analytical work is an important indicator for States' needs in the area of technical assistance. Ensuring its effectiveness therefore depends largely on the proper exchange of information, without excessive bureaucratization, between CTED and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Office.

We believe that the upcoming review of the CTED mandate will be the right moment to consider how the Council can strengthen the effectiveness of the Executive Directorate, particularly given the significant amount of useful work that it has done during and after country visits. It seems clear to us, for example, that we should get better returns on the recommendations made based on their results. At the moment, it appears that CTED's efforts are sometimes unfairly overlooked by States. That should be rectified. In our view, there are reserves that the Counter-Terrorism Committee could harness to streamline its procedures in the preparation stages for country visits. We trust that the Executive Directorate will summarize the opinions expressed today by States and use the time remaining until the review of its mandate to take stock of the experience of previous years and come up with its own ideas in this regard.

We look forward to constructive collective work in the Security Council during the forthcoming review of the CTED mandate. Our common goal is to achieve the full and honest fulfilment of Security Council resolutions, which the Committee has the unique potential to promote.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Mr. Scharia and Mr. Aboulatta for their briefings.

All over the world, we are confronting new and dangerous terrorist threats. We see terrorists using trucks to mow down innocent civilians in city centres, home-brewed improvised explosive devices left on trains, aeroplanes brought down by bombs smuggled on board. More than 17 years after the 9/11 attacks, terrorists continue to adapt their tactics and launch barbaric attacks to try to disrupt our modern way of life.

The United States is leading the fight against terrorism in all its forms. We head a coalition of States that is successfully liberating territory from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). ISIS is on the run. It is only a matter of time before it loses what is left of the territory it controls. The United States is also committed to holding State sponsors of terror accountable, especially the number-one such country, Iran.

But even as we and our partners step up our efforts to defeat terror, the United Nations has remained mostly on the sidelines. However, it does not have to be that way. The United Nations has a strong foundation to enable it to be an effective counter-terrorism partner, and that is the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is imperative, however, that we ensure a balanced implementation of the Strategy across all four of its pillars, including by integrating the prevention of violent extremism into pillars one and four.

The Security Council itself has adopted important resolutions that oblige all Member States to criminalize acts of terror, stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and end flows of foreign terrorist fighters. Yet those resolutions will be only words on paper if Member States do not step up and implement them. That is where the United Nations can do much more. It can help Member States strengthen their defences and follow through on the tough demands that the Council has made. That is especially true for Member States that may not have the resources or expertise to address all of their vulnerabilities. And when States have not shown the political will to follow through, we must all work together to press them to do so.

Where the Organization's own counter-terrorism architecture is concerned, the United States wants to see an active, strengthened and updated Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). We want to see a strong CTED that will help Member States understand the gaps in their counter-terrorism efforts and analyse the ways in which terrorist threats are changing. The United States will lead the effort to update the CTED mandate later this year to make the Organization more relevant to today's threats.

We also fully support the Secretary-General's effort to reform the way the United Nations addresses counter-terrorism. But to succeed, those reforms must do more than change the boxes on an organizational chart. For example, as the campaign against ISIS continues, some ISIS fighters will try to slip back into their home countries to plan new attacks. The United Nations should help Member States at risk to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and assess future

threats. It should also help Member States to keep their citizens from becoming radicalized in the first place.

The United Nations has a lot of tools available for Governments to draw on. There are experts in governance, development, communications, security and, of course, counter-terrorism. The United Nations should bring all of those components together when Governments need help fighting the spread of terrorist ideologies and preventing violent extremism from taking hold. We call on the entire United Nations system to support innovative, on-the-ground efforts to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing or recruiting individuals to commit acts of violence. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED must take the lead in making sure that everyone at the United Nations works together in this fight. If it is to expand its impact, the United Nations cannot work alone. It must get out of New York and engage the various players in the field. It can gain from their expertise.

As the United Nations strengthens its counter-terrorism efforts, respect for human rights is vital. Counter-terrorism should never be an excuse for ignoring human rights. The fact is that when Governments abuse human rights in the name of counter-terrorism, the tactics backfire. Abusing human rights actually increases local support for terrorism. Promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law must be a fundamental part of the United Nations work with Member States around the world.

Counter-terrorism is a major test of the relevance of the United Nations to the threats we face today. The United States will continue to take action against terrorism, but the United Nations can and must do more to help. We look to it to respond to global threats. Fighting terror is at the top of the list, so we urge the United Nations to step up and help Member States strengthen their efforts against this shared threat.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, Mr. Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, and Mr. David Scharia, Officer-in-Charge of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), for their informative briefings. I would like to take this opportunity to speak as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), focusing my remarks in the framework of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture.

The international community is facing a multitude of challenges from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and from Al-Qaida and their respective networks. Terrorist groups continue to adapt in response to global counter-terrorism efforts, and the Taliban remains a serious threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan. The Committee continues to administer measures that include assets freezes, travel bans and arms embargoes targeting designated individuals and groups associated with ISIL, Al-Qaida or the Taliban.

If the sanctions regimes are to operate effectively, it is crucial to ensure that the Committee's work goes in lockstep with the evolving global threat posed by these groups. In that regard, the Committee's work is supported by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, which continues to provide updated threat assessments and monitors the measures' implementation. The Monitoring Team closely coordinates its work with CTED and the Expert Group of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and participates actively in all relevant activities under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It also regularly contributes to the Secretary-General's reports on the threat posed by ISIL and the range of United Nations efforts supporting Member States in countering that threat. The Committee and the Monitoring Team stand ready to work closely with the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in executing its overarching mandate.

To fulfil the Committee's mandates, it is also important to coordinate effectively with key specialized agencies such as the International Air Transport Association, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Customs Organization, INTERPOL and the Financial Action Task Force, as well as with regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Monitoring Team also plays a key role in this matter. In order to

see how the sanctions regime can be implemented more effectively and to understand the national and regional challenges to implementing the Council's measures, I organize regional visits aimed at raising awareness of the Committee's mandate. Such visits serve to share the best practices employed by national authorities in combating terrorism, as it relates to the mandate of the Committee. In that regard, the Chair plans several visits in the near future to Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on Member States to continue their engagement with the work of the Committee and the Monitoring Team, as it is essential to the maintenance of an up-to-date and dynamic sanctions list. The Monitoring Team updates list entries based on information provided by Member States. I therefore encourage Member States to keep the monitoring team informed. I also urge those Member States that have not done so to submit their implementation reports mandated under the relevant resolutions.

It is also imperative that the Committee continues to promote due process in its work, in particular through the work of the Office of the Ombudsperson. As Chair, I would like to thank all Member States for their continued willingness to cooperate constructively with the Committee, its monitoring team and the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would also like to thank all the briefers here this morning and take this opportunity to welcome Under-Secretary-General Voronkov to his new post, wish him every success and tell him how much we are looking forward to working with him during his time.

As all of us in this Chamber know only too well, international terrorist groups like Da'esh and Al-Qaida seek to divide us. They seek to divide our communities and tear apart our countries, attacking our values and our institutions. But in the face of their attempts to divide us, one of our greatest weapons is our ability to come together and work together, and the Security Council is united in our desire to protect people across the world and defeat terrorism.

Our shared multilateral counter-terrorism system has never been so needed. Each constituent part is crucial. The Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the Coalition against Da'esh helped to forge our strategies and technical capabilities. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the newly created United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office marshall the resources of the United Nations to tackle both terrorism and violence extremism. The Council has a vital role to play, producing ever most sophisticated measures and guidance for States. I would like briefly to highlight two opportunities to improve and recalibrate the United Nations counter-terrorism approach.

First, we must maximize the impact and effectiveness of CTED. I would like to congratulate CTED for its work to date. It is a well-functioning United Nations entity with real expertise and knowledge. CTED's proactive approach to new counter-terrorism issues has been welcome. Its guidelines on foreign terrorist fighters and counter-narratives, for example, are excellent benchmarks. Further, CTED's work on public-private partnerships on the Internet has been vital, for example, working with the ICT4Peace Foundation and the world's largest tech firms in addressing terrorism and violence extremism content online. Governments have also built new relationships with the private sector as demonstrated last week when my Prime Minister along with partners from Italy and France for the first time hosted the world's largest information technology companies at the United Nations to address terrorist use of the Internet.

The CTED mandate renewal at the end of this year is a chance to enhance its impact. This should include learning lessons on how to address emerging security issues, improving country assessments and making sure they are acted upon, ensuring that technical expertise is fully used, and providing guidance on prioritization. We look forward to welcoming Michèle Coninsx as the new Executive Director and hearing her ideas for how to further improve this important office.

The second opportunity we see is to give priority to prevention, addressing the root causes and the violent extremism that spawns terrorism. For every person who is radicalized into terrorism, there is first an environment in which ideology, economic factors and grievances are bent to a violent end by opportunistic leaders. This can happen, I am afraid, in schools, places of worship and prisons. States can address a terrorist case with all of the intelligence, police, judicial and even military means at their disposal. But as Under-Secretary-General Voronkov says, until we break the life cycle of radicalization and terrorism and address the environments in which calls to terrorism are espoused

and take hold, there will always be another would-be terrorist waiting to emerge. That is why preventing violent extremism is a vital investment for peace and security and why I think Secretary-General Guterres highlighted it when he established the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office.

I therefore believe that the strategic leadership and coordinating function of the Counter-Terrorism Office is vital in this context. The Office should use its central coordination role to look outside traditional peace and security analysis and draw on United Nations expertise in human rights, development, gender issues and education, to name just a few. Only then can the United Nations help countries address a violent extremist threat before it explodes into a threat to international peace and security. The United Nations potential to help States prevent violent extremism is unique and rightly lies at the heart of the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Office.

I would like to pose a question if I may to Under-Secretary-General Voronkov. I found his description of his strategy extremely helpful when he set it out in his briefing, and I wonder if he might take the opportunity, either now or later, to say more about how he sees the Counter-Terrorism Office delivering the vital mandate from the General Assembly for the preventive pillar of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and how he might use his chairmanship of the Secretary-General's High-Level Preventing Violent Extremism Action Group to coordinate this. It would be really good to hear some more about that.

Multilateral cooperation must continue to effectively counter terrorism and violent extremism. A smoothly functioning CTED, a newly-established Counter-Terrorism Office and a truly strategic United Nations approach to prevention coordinated by the Counter-Terrorism Office are two concrete ways to assist in this endeavour.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to begin by welcoming Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov to his post as head of the newly created United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office. I would also like to thank him, Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Mr. Scharia of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), for their briefings on the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

It has been 16 years since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001). Despite the international community's numerous counter-terrorism efforts since then, we continue to witness terrorist attacks all over the world with alarming frequency. In Europe this year alone, we saw serious terrorist attacks in London, Manchester and Barcelona. In Asia, a group claiming to be the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-East Asia has been fighting with the Government over the city of Marawi in the Philippines since May. The threat posed by terrorists is evolving globally, particularly with foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin or relocating to other regions.

In addition, we are alarmed by terrorists' evolving tactics, which include diversifying financial sources, disseminating propaganda through social media, exploiting encrypted applications and using broken travel. We have heard reports of the use of bitcoin and drones. In response to terrorists' evolving tactics, we must enhance our capacities and vigorously implement counter-terrorism resolutions.

In addition to resolution 1373 (2001), the Council has recently adopted resolutions 2309 (2016), on aviation security; 2322 (2016), on international judicial cooperation; 2341 (2017), on protection of critical infrastructure; 2354 (2017) on counter-narratives; and 2370 (2017), on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. The adoption of these resolutions is important, but their full implementation is vital.

Japan has implemented these resolutions and developed new measures in response to terrorists' evolving tactics. For example, we recently enacted laws to prevent terrorists from using bitcoin and virtual currencies and to prohibit drones from flying over critical facilities, embassies, and nuclear plants. To strengthen international judicial cooperation against transnational organized crimes, including terrorism, Japan, as a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its supplementing protocols, will cooperate more effectively with each State party in investigation assistance and extradition.

The terrorist threat is global and we must extend assistance to those in need as part of our collective response. Japan, for example, provided $35 million in March, mainly in South-East Asia, in the light of the increasing threat in that region. That will be used to

facilitate the implementation of relevant resolutions through concrete projects, including the Advance Passenger Information system, international judicial cooperation, INTERPOL databases and counter-propaganda. Japan will continue to work closely with CTC and CTED towards the full implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions.

The new Office of Counter-Terrorism is expected to greatly enhance coordination of counter-terrorism measures in all Member States. We should build on that momentum. Japan looks forward to close collaboration with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Under-Secretary-General Voronkov. The Council must be united in fighting terrorism by implementing our resolutions, including resolution 1373 (2001), and further developing our counter-terrorism measures.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening this briefing on the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001), which provides us with an international framework for combatting terrorism. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Vladimir Voronkov on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and to thank him for his briefing. I extend my thanks to the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, for his work at the helm of the Committee and for his briefing today, as well as to Mr. David Scharia of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Regrettably, the global terrorism threat has become a pervasive issue and terrorist acts are occurring at an intolerable rate. The international community must take united action because it cannot allow terrorism to continue to take innocent lives and destabilize States, and because it must protect the rights and values that terrorists seek to destroy. In his statement before the General Assembly at its seventy-second general debate (see A/72/PV.3), Secretary-General António Guterres referred to the global threat of terrorism with precision and clarity. We endorse his words, which describe the complexity of the problem we face.

We value and support the work of the United Nations through its various organs and entities. We trust that under the leadership of the recently established Office of Counter-Terrorism, the fight against the scourge of terrorism will benefit from renewed impetus. Among the functions of that new Office, we would underscore the improved assistance offered to Member States in developing their counter-terrorism capacity. That assistance is crucial, especially to those countries that are most affected by the actions of terrorist groups, in enabling them to confront terrorist acts with adequate means and resources, in allowing them to benefit from cooperation and in exercising their sovereignty.

We consider the role of Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate to be critical in assessing the status of States' implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) and in promoting the adoption of measures that support its implementation. We also emphasize the importance of their role in facilitating technical assistance. We are grateful for the Counter-Terrorism Committee's visit to Uruguay in March. We attach great importance to the recommendations that were made and are taking them into consideration. We are working to advance the implementation of various aspects set out in various Security Council resolutions. Examples include the draft comprehensive counter-terrorism law and the draft comprehensive anti-asset laundering law. Both draft laws are currently before our National Parliament for review and both include recommendations made by the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We are aware of the importance of acting collectively in this fight and of the need to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels. We acknowledge cooperation as a part of our responsibility, as a member of the international community, to act and to protect. Cooperation makes us stronger. We believe that the fight against terrorism must be made in respect for and accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. We reaffirm our commitment to working in solidarity and with responsibility for the success of that task.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to warmly thank our briefers, beginning with the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov. We have already had the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Voronkov and to offer him France's fully support for his initiatives, but today I once again reiterate our most sincere wishes of success, as this is his first briefing before the Security Council.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Amr Aboulatta for his briefing and for the leadership shown

by his country at the helm of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

Finally, I wish to express France's gratitude to Mr. David Scharia for his briefing on the outstanding action led by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and to take this opportunity to emphasize that France eagerly looks forward to the arrival in New York of the new Executive Director, Ms. Michèle Coninsx.

Terrorism currently is one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. Naturally, the fight against terrorism is at the heart of the Security Council's work. It requires an organized, firm and united response on the part of States and the international community as a whole. Today, I will focus on two main observations — first, on the essential role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism, and secondly, on the role of the Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Committee, in particular.

While it is primarily up to States to adopt the measures and mechanisms necessary to combat terrorism, the United Nations also has a major and growing role to play. Terrorism is one of those global threats that require a global response, and the United Nations therefore has as an invaluable mission in that regard. The United Nations is not working from a blank page. To date, it has fulfilled three key functions in the fight against terrorism.

First, standards and obligations must be developed to allow States to establish robust counter-terrorism mechanisms. A number of important thematic Security Council resolutions have been adopted since 2001 to that end, particularly over the past three years, covering many aspects of counter-terrorism, such as financing, anti-propaganda campaigns and foreign terrorist fighters.

Secondly, the adoption of sanctions aimed at depriving terrorist groups of the means to commit attacks, such as the regime pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The United Nations has developed important know-how in that field.

Lastly, the strengthening of international cooperation and dialogue to encourage States to work together more effectively and to exchange good practices is obviously an essential point and a key priority for all of us.

With the rise of Da'esh in 2014, the terrorist threat has significantly evolved. The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the wide scale use of the Internet and social networks for recruitment, funding and calls to action have given a new dimension to the threat, which is now truly global. Combating terrorism has therefore become a new frontier for the United Nations among other major global challenges, such as climate change and migration. The United Nations therefore has both the obligation and the responsibility to ensure that its response is well adapted to the threat. In that regard, the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the appointment of an Under-Secretary-General at its head, dedicated to this issue, represent a real breakthrough. France welcomes that development and hopes that it will improve the coherence of the United Nations work in this area and increase its visibility.

I turn now to my second comment, which concerns the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, as the concept note encourages us to lend closer attention to resolution 1373 (2001). At the core of the new counter-terrorism architecture, the Counter-Terrorism Committee must continue to fulfil two essential functions both of which are equally important. The first involves raising States' awareness of developments with regard to the terrorist threat. The Committee can carry out that work only with the support of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which has considerable expertise in that area at its disposal. I would like to commend today the excellent work that the CTED teams are carrying out. The issues on which it is working are very much in line with France's priorities, including countering terrorist propaganda, especially on the Internet, and the financing of terrorism, among others.

Through President Macron's commitment, France is playing a major role in addressing those two issues. In that regard, France, along with the United Kingdom and Italy, organized on the sidelines of the General Assembly a high-level meeting on the use of the Internet by terrorists groups. The first of its kind, that meeting allowed us to strengthen dialogue with Internet companies. As President Macron underscored, that represented a major step, but we must go even further. He also announced that France will hold an international conference on the financing of terrorism in early 2018. We, of course, also encourage CTED to pursue its work in both of those areas.

The second function of the Committee as implemented by CTED is to assess how the States implement the relevant resolutions. That type of assessment is essential. France encourages all States to accept visits by the Executive Directorate so that it can audit their counter-terrorism systems and come up with optimum recommendations. For its part, France received its last visit by CTED in 2015 and drew important lessons. Since that time, numerous administrative and legislative measures have been adopted so as to strengthen our counter-terrorism systems. Moreover, it is essential that, based on those assessments and recommendations, technical assistance programmes can subsequently be designed and implemented by the relevant United Nations entities. In that particular regard, close cooperation between CTED and the new Office of Counter-Terrorism will be crucial.

Terrorism is now one of the major global challenges that States can no longer face alone. As President Macron reminded us at the General Assembly last week (see A/72/PV.4), France believes that multilateralism is not only the right way to react in terms of legitimacy, but also in terms of effectiveness, so as to respond to those challenges.

Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni (Sweden): I would like to begin by joining others in welcoming Under-Secretary-General Voronkov to the Security Council for his first briefing. Let me also thank Ambassador Aboulatta and Mr David Scharia for their briefings on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism (CTC), and of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), respectively.

In his address to the General Assembly last week (see A/72/PV.3), the Secretary-General identified terrorism as one of the seven threats and challenges that are undermining our efforts to achieve peace and a better world. He also noted, however, that counter-terrorism efforts have disrupted networks, reclaimed territory, prevented attacks and saved lives. Nonetheless, it is clear that if we are to overcome the threat to our societies from terrorism, our work must be intensified, not least in the area of international cooperation.

The transnational nature of many terrorist operations make the prevention of terrorist attacks by any one country alone more difficult. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) as the first of his reform initiatives. We look forward to working with Under-Secretary-General Voronkov going forward. Sweden greatly appreciates the work of the UNOCT, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. CTED's expert assessments and work to facilitate Member States' implementation of the Council's counter-terrorism resolutions is essential. UNOCT's ongoing work to ensure implementation across all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as its bolstered capability to deliver capacity-building assistance to Member States, also represents invaluable support for national efforts.

Special attention is needed with regard to the multiple roles played by women with regard to terrorism, including those of perpetrator, supporter, facilitator, victim and preventer. Each of those roles requires different approaches and strategies as part of our fight against terrorism. It is important that CTED continue its work on promoting the role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism. We recognize CTED's important work on developing thematic work streams on issues, such as gender and its inclusion in assessments, dialogues and analytical products. Such thinking must also be mainstreamed into UNOCT's work. Sweden will continue to propose that references to women, peace and security, as well as women's role in relation to terrorism and violent extremism, are included in relevant Council work, including in the new CTED mandate.

As we said yesterday during our debate on aviation security (see S/PV.8057), there is no room for complacency in the fight against terrorism. The terrorist threat is always evolving, and attacks over the past year, including in Stockholm, have shown that we need to be constantly vigilant. We must continue working to improve our counter-terrorism efforts. Sweden is committed to that work, as well as to working together with our European Union partners to that end.

In a broader context, we also need to ensure continued efforts to prevent the emergence of radicalization and violent extremism. That work should be aligned with our common United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The newly established United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism will be instrumental in seeing that work through.

Among other actions, Sweden has supported work by the United Nations Development Programme in connection with the prevention of extremism, including the recently released report, *Journey to extremism in Africa: Drivers, incentives and the tipping point for recruitment*. That report clearly shows that supporting the social sectors in a participatory way at the local level leads to hope and a sense of belonging that counters violence and disruption. Inclusive societies, education, growth and globalization are central to those prevention efforts. Fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can deliver that inclusivity, which is required to help prevent violent extremism and should be seen as integral to our efforts.

Let me conclude by also stressing that, of course, the measures that we take against terrorism must always comply with international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Today's debate, which follows logically on from yesterday's debate on civil aviation security, once again illustrates the special importance that the Security Council attaches to the fight against the scourge of terrorism. Indeed, the multiplication and sophistication of terrorist attacks throughout the world continually remind us of the severity of that pernicious threat to international peace and security. I therefore thank the Ethiopian presidency and the Russian delegation for facilitating this particularly timely meeting.

My thanks and welcome also go to Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ambassador Amr Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee; and Mr. David Scharia of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. The quality of their briefings on the multifaceted action of the United Nations in its fight against terrorism helped to enrich our discussions.

When the Council adopted resolution 1373 (2001), establishing the Counter-Terrorism Committee, we could not have imagined that, 16 years later, international terrorism would have reached its current appalling proportions. Rather than giving in to discouragement at its apparent failure in finding adequate responses, in the light of the scourge the international community must adopt a coercive, inclusive and united long-term approach.

To that end, the revision and streamlining of the legal and institutional framework for the fight against terrorism are imperative. That is why the Senegalese delegation welcomed the establishment of the new Office of Counter-Terrorism and the position of Under-Secretary-General at its head, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/291 of 15 June 2017. We encourage the Office to strive for better coordination among the various bodies, programmes and agencies involved in counter-terrorism.

Terrorist movements increasingly use the Internet and social media in their vile business of inciting violence, recruiting foreign terrorist fighters, and funding and planning terrorists acts. Those movements take advantage of the flaws in financial systems and national and international legal frameworks to raise funds, including by trafficking in and selling oil, kidnapping for ransoms, trafficking in persons, arms, drugs and cultural goods, and other forms of extortion.

To prevent terrorists from pursuing their criminal actions, States must now energetically implement the relevant provisions of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2133 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2195 (2014) and 2253 (2015) by strengthening their cooperation in the field of intelligence-sharing and better collaborating with private providers to improve regulatory systems. I pay tribute here to the outstanding work accomplished by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate in monitoring Member States' implementation of the aforementioned resolutions. Indeed, given the evolving and multifaceted nature of terrorism, the ongoing increase in the number of resolutions adopted by the Security Council considerably broadens the scope of intervention of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, whereas human and financial resources do not always keep up with such developments, which could ultimately affect the effectiveness of that body.

By way of illustration, the country visits of the Executive Directorate to assess the progress of, challenges to and technical assistance required by Member States could be better monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, in consultation with the countries concerned. Similarly, national, subregional and regional specificities and constraints must be taken into account in the context of building the capacities of States to fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolutions. In that context, it is important for Member States, while maintaining their sovereignty, to adopt

national strategies and action plans that are based on local realities and better adapted to socioeconomic and security contexts.

In its efforts to implement measures to eliminate international terrorism and violent extremism, Senegal has adopted an approach that is based on prevention, cooperation and rapid response. My country also actively cooperates in the fields of international counter-terrorism criminal justice; surveillance of land, maritime and airport borders; and mutual legal assistance in combating money-laundering and terrorist financing. In addition, two laws were passed in 2007 that apply harsher penalties to terrorist perpetrators, while a draft national strategy against terrorism and violent extremism is under development.

Moreover, the promotion of dialogue and conflict prevention, the involvement of populations through the mobilization of young people, the empowerment of women, education, capacity-building, the use of religious leaders to deconstruct rhetoric and the ideology of terrorist groups, and the facilitation of access to employment are all essential components for the prevention of violent extremism and can prevent the radicalization of young people and their recruitment by extremist organizations.

In conclusion, I solemnly reiterate my country's support for the Counter-Terrorism Committee, its Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, while advocating for the strengthening of their human and financial resources.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Ethiopian presidency and the Russian Mission for organizing this important informative meeting.

We are grateful for the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, Vladimir Voronkov, to whom we wish the greatest success in the sensitive work assigned to him. We are also grateful for the briefings by Ambassador Aboulatta, in his capacity as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Mr. David Scharia, Officer-in-Charge of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The scenarios in which terrorism operates at the local, regional and global levels are today one of the greatest challenges facing the international community. We therefore urgently call on the Security Council and the general membership to redouble their efforts against this scourge by improving coordination and international cooperation, using all the means provided for by the Charter of the United Nations and their commitments under international law.

Within the framework of the joint international counter-terrorism effort, it is necessary to reiterate that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, and that those characteristics should in no circumstances be used to justify measures aimed at fighting or preventing it.

Bolivia, as a State that promotes the culture of peace and, first and foremost, protects and guarantees human rights and respect for international law, is fulfilling its international obligations in the fight against terrorism. We have implemented the provisions set out in resolution 1373 (2001). We have codified terrorism and terrorist financing as serious crimes. And we have in place a domestic agency to prevent, detect, investigate and implement monitoring measures to avert the carrying out of terrorist acts. Likewise, Bolivia is always collaborating and coordinating with other countries in exchanging financial intelligence to conduct investigations into suspect economic flows that could be linked to money laundering or terrorist financing. We have a normative framework in place that enables us to adopt measures such as preventive freezing of funds and other assets of individual or legal entities — identified in lists published by the United Nations — who could be linked to terrorism or the financing of terrorism.

In addition, through its 2013 law on the control of fire arms, munitions, explosives and other related materials, Bolivia has at its disposal a concrete legal framework to regulate the use and bearing of firearms, explosives and other related materials. We have thereby set up the relevant legal mechanisms for preventing, combating and punishing crimes related to illegal trafficking in weapons, firearms and explosives.

Against that backdrop, we call on the international community to promote the active role of States in combating terrorism. As we heard yesterday in the meeting on aviation security (see S/PV.8057), technical and financial cooperation are crucial to ensure that all States can work on technical mechanisms that will help us to build capacity to improve on making our fight against terrorism much more effective.

Given the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism to international peace and security, we believe that we must look into what are the root causes and its enabling forces around the world so as to make the fight against the scourge more effective and avoid us making the same mistakes again.

Let us be clear that the policies of regime change, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of other States have been some of the key reasons that have led to the vacuums in Governments, weaker law and order and the absence of control of their borders. These factors have facilitated the work of terrorist groups and extremists who find space to impose their violent ideology and commit acts of destabilization, including carrying out human rights violations that could be tantamount to crimes against humanity.

Unfortunately, the victims of the acts committed by terrorist organizations are civilians, including the most vulnerable among them. This is reflected in the high rate of violence against women we have witnessed, as well as through the countless reports that the Council has received, which point to the fact that sexual violence perpetrated by grouops such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab is not only persistent, but an organic part of their ideology. Based on the Secretary General's report (S/2017/249) on sexual violence in conflict situations issued in April, the increase in the number of women and female children subjected to sexual slavery, as well as used as human shields and suicide bombers, highlights their situation as expendable resources in the terrorist system.

There is no denying that terrorism and armed violence and instrinsically linked to the crime of human trafficking and associated crimes. International criminal groups and terrorist groups, which the Council and all the countries of this Organization are fighting against, earn money through human trafficking and exploitation and they use the proceeds to finance their terrorist activities. As a result, those resources are part of the global financial system through money laundering and tax havens. These resources tend to diminish or eliminate checks, especially in terms of investment in the tertiary sector, and they are used by the criminial networks to legitimize their gains. Therefore, we believe the international community must pool its efforts to determine whether terrorist groups have access to the international financial system via tax havens, including taking steps to prevent it.

We believe that all the efforts of the Security Council and the United Nations to eliminate terrorism must be backed by all its Members, who must seek out and bring the perpetrators to justice: they must be investigated, prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent. Finally, we express our strong support for a transparent and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and we call on all States to commit to fighting this scourge.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): May I begin by thanking Ethiopia and the Russian Federation for their iniative in convening today's open meeting. We welcome Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov. We stand ready to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office under his leadership. We also wish to thank Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Mr. Scharia, Officer-in-Charge of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, for the briefings.

Terrorism is the common enemy of all humankind. The international community must use uniform standards. We must resolutely fight terrorists no matter where they are, what flag they fly, which country they attack or whatever means they employ. In countering terrorism, the sovereignty of the countries concerned must be respected, the leadership role of the United Nations and the Security Council must be given full play and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be observed.

Terrorism must not be associated with any particular ethnicity or religion. The international community should promote the use of political means and dialogue to address regional conflicts and eradicate the root causes that give rise to terrorism. Countries should enhance border control and law-enforcement cooperation and disrupt the network by which terrorists operate. More robust efforts should be made to combat terrorism financing. The international community should undertake pragmatic and results-oriented cooperation by joining hands to combat the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes such as terrorist propaganda, financing, recruitment, incitement and planning.

In recent years, the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), as an important platform of the Security Council in dealing with counter-terrorism issues, has closely monitored the new terrorist threats and trends

and facilitated the comprehensive implementation of the relevant Council resolutions by Member States. The CTC works in close coordination with other United Nations entities to advance the international counter-terrorism agenda, which has produced positive and effective results.

The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) is the executive arm of the CTC. Through country visits and assessments, it assists Member States in identifying deficiencies and challenges they face, while facilitating the exchange of counter-terrorism experience and providing technical assistance to Member States. In that way, it plays an important role in strengthening the capacity of Member States to combat terrorism.

China supports the enhanced cooperation among the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the CTC, CTED and the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2001). On the basis of the functions and responsibilities relating to counter-terrorism as mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Office assists Member States in the implementation of the relevant counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Along with the broader membership of the international community, China will continue to strictly implement the relevant Council resolutions and proactively promote international counter-terrorism cooperation so as to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to thank the Ethiopian presidency of the Security Council for convening this important meeting with the view to bringing greater coherence and focus to the issue. I wish to take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Aboulatta, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, to welcome Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Head of the newly established Office of Counter-Terrorism, and to thank Mr. Scharia for his briefing.

As others have reminded us, on this very day 16 years ago, in the aftermath of the attacks against the United States, the Security Council took an important step in addressing the scourge of terrorism by adopting resolution 1373 (2001), a text that still represents a milestone in the international community's efforts in tackling the terrorist threat. Since then, Member States have been confronted with new challenges, including the increasing flows of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to, or returning from, conflict zones the misuse of the Internet and social media by terrorists and entities, as well as the exploitation of trafficking by criminals and terrorist networks.

In the years since the adoption of this important resolution, its call on Member States to refrain from providing any form of support to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts, as well as its call on Member States to strengthen their legal and institutional capabilities to counter terrorism, could not be more timely or valid. In that framework, we are strongly committed to contributing to international efforts. In particular, with respect to the anti-Da'esh coalition, Italy co-chairs the working group on countering the financing of terrorism. We are providing the second contingent of the anti-Da'esh coalition, which provides daily support to Iraqi authorities by training security personnel in various fields, such as intelligence, law enforcement, border patrol and street policing.

Italy recognizes the relevance of the ongoing work of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) — concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities — and of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). We particularly appreciate efforts of CTED to assist Member States in achieving the full implementation of the relevant resolutions. We attribute great value to the assessment visits of CTED to Member States. They are vital tools for the identification of, inter alia, gaps, challenges, good practices and general trends. All of that knowledge should be made available to the relevant United Nations bodies and should be instrumental in prioritizing technical assistance interventions.

We also welcome the initiative undertaken by CTED to update the 2009 Technical Guide in order to reflect the requirements set by relevant resolutions of the Council and provide Member States with a practical reference tool that helps ensure the consistent analysis of their implementation efforts. While acknowledging the key role played by CTED in the counter-terrorism framework of the United Nations, and in view of the renewal of its mandate, it is our hope that the Directorate will be provided with the necessary resources to continue its important work.

A comprehensive approach to violent extremism and terrorism is critical. The recent event mentioned by

other colleagues on preventing the use of the Internet by terrorists, which was hosted by France, Italy and the United Kingdom on the sidelines of the General Assembly on 20 Septmber, can provide important input for the strengthening of cooperation between Governments and private companies. Italy is playing a leading role in the fight against terrorism by focusing on training and countering all forms of financial support to terrorist groups, as well as through a strong response to human trafficking, trafficking in cultural property and illegal financial flows and money-laundering. That is because terrorism and violent extremism cannot be defeated through solely military means. We must also consider and address the underlying forces that facilitate violent extremism and the spread of messages of hate. Therefore, we are committed to support any intiatives that address the root causes of extremism, focusing on, inter alia, countering radicalization in jails and supporting youth programmes through the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

In that wider framework, Italy has fully supported the process undertaken by the General Assembly to further enhance the existing counter-terrorism architecture and ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which is headed by Under-Secretary-General Voronkov. We think that the new body will provide a very important added value, both in the prevention of, and in the fight against, violent extremism. It is our hope that the Counter-Terrorism Office will play a key role in coordinating the several entities involved in the field of counter-terrorism by contributing to the identification of priority areas of intervention, as well as by taking a proactive approach. At the same time, it should aim to avoid task duplication and anything that might significantly impact the mandate of other bodies.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine) I thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and other briefers for their inputs to today's discussion. We welcome the Under-Secretary-General and wish him the best in his highly responsible work.

The past decades have been marked by the spread of violent extremist ideologies and the emergence of terrorist groups that are fuelled by them. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and other groups have grown from being regional menaces to global threats to international peace and security. Over the past years, Ukraine has also accrued bitter experiences of countering terrorist threats that have been fuelled by external support for terrorist groups and organizations in the east of my country.

The fight against terrorism has now firmly become a key priority of the United Nations, leading to the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) and subsequent fundamental resolutions, as well as the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006. That also resulted in the establishment of key Security Council and General Assembly bodies, such the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), as well as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. Although initially they had different mandates, later development of the counter-terrorism norms of the United Nations led to an overlap in the activities of those bodies, as well as competition for resources, influence and project ownership. Therefore, ensuring mutually re-enforcing cooperation and avoiding duplication of effort among United Nations bodies that work on counter-terrorism-related issues remains an ongoing challenge for the United Nations.

Ukraine has consistently supported the need to enhance coherence and leadership of the United Nations system in dealing with terrorist threats, including by conducting a reform of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture. Therefore, the creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is a welcome step in that direction. We expect that it will mainstream counter-terrorism efforts within the United Nations system and contribute to the proper implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as to the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

In order to ensure that the stance of the United Nations regarding countering terrorism remains strong, we expect the new office to deliver the following: first, show strategic leadership and commitment to action, while addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism on the basis of an all-Organization approach; secondly, ensure appropriate resources and expertise to provide policy advice on counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism; thirdly, strengthen its strategic policy and programme guidance to Member States through close cooperation with the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and forums; and, fourthly, enhance collaboration

among all United Nations entities operating in the field and conduct outreach to civil society actors.

We recognize the central role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in overseeing the implementation of specific counter-terrorism measures established by the Security Council, monitoring the compliance of States with their respective obligations and promoting international cooperation in the field. We would like to commend the work of CTED, which conducts country visits on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in order to assess the implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2178). It also detects possible gaps in the existing regulations using a detailed survey tool, identifies the assistance needs of States and facilitates the delivery of respective aid by engaging in dialogue with prospective multilateral and bilateral donors. In particular, we take positive note of the recent update of the Technical Guide to assist countries in their implementation efforts. That work is vital for fostering the development of national legislation and practices in criminal justice matters, international cooperation, financial intelligence, border security and law enforcement.

We have a very good experience of cooperation with the Executive Directorate, which visited Ukraine in 2013. I would like to take this opportunity to underline that we expect CTED to conduct a follow-up mission to Ukraine in November, based on the CTC-approved plan of visits for the period of 2014-2017. On our side, we are keen to provide any necessary assistance in its preparation.

Let me also touch upon the issue of the upcoming revision of CTED's mandate. We are pleased that the CTEC programme of work of duly reflects all of the new topics identified by the Council in its recent resolutions. Yesterday, on aviation security (see S/PV.8057), we discussed international judicial cooperation, protection of critical infrastructure and cultural property, countering terrorist narratives and curbing the weapons supply to terrorists, all of which are of particular importance to our common efforts. New challenges may also arise that will require the Council's close attention.

However, given the drastic expansion of the mandate of CTED, there is a need to ensure that its planned activities are performed timely and that Member States can fully benefit from its expertise. CTED should therefore be provided with adequate capacities and resources. In that regard, Ukraine is ready to provide its own contribution to the improvement of the functioning of CTED, in particular through the nomination of qualified experts for professional posts to the enlarged entity. My delegation stands ready to engage constructively in the process of the renewal of the mandate of the Directorate at the end of the year.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Ethiopia.

We are pleased to have taken the initiative to convene this briefing meeting, together with our Russian colleagues. We join other Security Council members in congratulating Under-Secretary-General Voronkov on his appointment as the head of the new Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as for his maiden briefing to the Council, in which he outlined his vision and priorities. I would also like once again to express appreciation to Ambassador Aboulatta for his briefing today, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001), concerning Counter-Terrorism (CTC). We are also thankful to David Scharia for sharing the perspective of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

The scourge of terrorism has been a major threat to us all for decades now, and the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001)provided the international community with a framework to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The resolution established the Security Council counter-terrorism architecture, including the CTC and CTED, and laid the foundation for other resolutions. We recognize and commend the indispensable role of the CTC in monitoring the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions on counter-terrorism.

We also appreciate the work of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate fo inimplementing the decisions of the CTC, the expert assessments it provides, as well as its assistance to Member States in the implementation of resolutions on terrorism on behalf of CTC. We particularly note the increase in the number of country assessments and follow-ups in facilitating technical assistance when that is needed by the Member States concerned. In that regard, the CTC and CTED have rightly contributed to enhancing the capacity of Member States to prevent terrorist activities. The adoption by the General Assembly of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, on 28 September 2006, was

another milestone thatprovided a global framework for enhancing national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism.

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force has also played a very important role in implementing the Strategy in that regard. The recent creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General are very much welcomed. We hope that will enhance greater coherence and synergy among United Nations entities working on counter-terrorism.

Although significant progress has been made by Member States in implementing resolution 1373 (2001) and other resolutions, what has been done remains insufficient and terrorists continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Today's briefing will help us to reflect on the achievements made so far and the challenges that need to be addressed.

The CTED global implementation survey and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy clearly indicate that new and emerging threats, including transnational organized crimes and their linkage to terrorism financing and the use of the Internet and other communications technologies by terrorists, are posing an enormous challenge, and they require greater attention. The challenge that developing countries face in that regard is particularly enormous.

We believe that efficiently and effectively addressing the issues of the compliance of Member States with their obligations, establishing more coordinated and enforcement mechanisms under the auspices of the CTC and CTED to monitor the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions, ensuring better cooperation among the relevant stakeholders and facilitating the provision of technical assistance under resolution 1373 (2001) for Member States when they need it, will go a long way in facilitating implementation and addressing the new and emerging challenges.

On its part, Ethiopia is striving to implement resolution 1373 (2001) and other international and regional counter-terrorism frameworks. In that context, it is keen to work with all of the stakeholders in existing and new regional and international corporation platforms, but it is not only a matter of carrying out our obligation. We find ourselves in a volatile neighbourhood, which is facing threats of terrorism and violent extremism, and we can see that implementing resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions on counter-terrorism is a matter of absolute necessity.

We have enacted an appropriate policy and legal measures and an appropriate institutional framework in that regard. In addition to what we are doing within the framework of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and African Union, we are also cooperating with the United Nations. The recent comprehensive monitoring and promotional visit by the CTC to Ethiopia is a case in point.

Therefore, I would like to conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's readiness to continuing to work with Member States, the United Nations and other stakeholders in countering the menace of terrorism and violent extremism, which are among the biggest international peace and security threats of our time.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Voronkov to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Voronkov (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank all of the Ambassadors for their words of support. Furthermore, I would like to note that I understand and fully grasp the responsibility that has fallen to me. I will endeavour in my work to rise to such expectations, as well as those of Secretary-General António Guterres. I stand ready to work closely with the Counter-Terrorsim Committee and its Executive Directorate on matters that are of mutual interest with regard to the fight against terrorism.

(*spoke in English*)

I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his question on how to better arrange the capabilities of the United Nations to more effectively combat violent extremism. We did a preliminary analysis of the statements made in the General Assembly and all of the priorities related to counter-terrorism raised by Member States during the General Assembly session. Preventing violent extremism and addressing the drivers was the second most-important priority. There are several guidelines that help to frame the work of the United Nations on the prevention of violent extremism.

First, preventing violent extremism is anchored in the first pillar one of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Secondly, our focus is on preventing and addressing the drivers as identified in the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Thirdly, our work is based on full respect for State sovereignty and the principle of non-interference. Member States take the lead at the national level, and regional organizations at the regional level.

Fourthly, the role of the United Nations is to support Member States and regional organizations, upon their request, in developing national and regional plans of action.

Fifthly, the plans of action put national Governments and regional organizations at the forefront of efforts to prevent violent extremism, and the United Nations provides support to capacity-building initiatives.

I would also like to recall that the Secretary-General has established an all-of-United Nations framework to assist Member States in preventing violent extremism. At the highest level, the Secretary-General chairs a high-level action group on preventing violent extremist, made up of 22 relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and spearheads the implementation of the Plan of Action across the United Nations system. We at the Office of Counter-Terrorism will report to the Secretary-General on those issues.

With regard to certain data, I would like to mention that there are already 224 United Nations projects and initiatives on preventing violent extremism, carried out by 15 United Nations entities across all seven priority areas of the United Nations Plan of Action. Eighty-two of those projects are global, 67 are regional and 75 are national. The national and regional projects are being implemented in 77 countries across all regions upon their request.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for the clarifications he has provided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.